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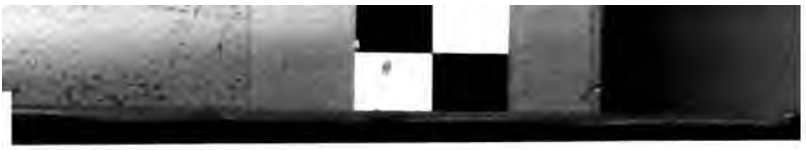

# DENIS DUVAL:

# LOVEL THE WIDOWER:

## AND OTHER STORIES.

By W. M. THACKERAY.

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# DENIS DUVAL.

# DENIS DUVAL.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE FAMILY TREE.

TO plague my wife, who does not understand pleasantries in the matter of pedigree, I once drew a fine family tree of my ancestors, with Claude Duval, captain and highwayman, *sus. per coll.* in the reign of Charles II., dangling from a top branch. But this is only my joke with her High Mightiness my wife, and his Serene Highness my son. None of us Duvals have been *suspercollated* to my knowledge. As a boy, I have tasted a rope's-end often enough, but not round my neck; and the persecutions endured by my ancestors in France for our Protestant religion, which we early received and steadily maintained, did not bring death upon us, as upon many of our faith, but only fines and poverty, and exile from our native country. The world knows how the bigotry of Lewis XIV. drove many families out of France into England, who have become trusty and loyal subjects of the British crown. Among the thousand fugitives were my grandfather and his wife. They settled at Winchelsea, in Sussex, where there has been a French church ever since Queen Bess's time and the dreadful day of Saint Bartholomew. Three miles off, at Rye, is another colony and church of our people: another *fester Burg*, where, under Britannia's sheltering buckler, we have been free to exercise our fathers' worship, and sing the songs of our Zion.

My grandfather was elder and precentor of the church of Winchelsea, the pastor being Monsieur Denis, father of Rear-Admiral Sir Peter Denis, Baronet, my kind and best patron. He sailed with Anson in the famous "Centurion," and obtained his first promotion

through that great seaman: and of course you will all remember that it was Captain Denis who brought our good Queen Charlotte to England (7th September, 1761), after a stormy passage of nine days, from Stade. As a child I was taken to his house in Great Ormond Street, Queen Square, London, and also to the Admiral's country-seat, Valence, near Westerham, in Kent, where Colonel Wolfe lived, father of the famous General James Wolfe, the glorious conqueror of Quebec.*

My father, who was of a wandering disposition, happened to be at Dover in the year 1761, when the Commissioners passed through, who were on their way to sign the treaty of Peace, known as the Peace of Paris. He had parted, after some hot words, I believe, from his mother, who was, like himself, of a quick temper, and he was on the look-out for employment when Fate threw these gentlemen in his way. Mr. Duval spoke English, French, and German, his parents being of Alsace, and Mr. —— having need of a confidential person to attend him, who was master of the languages, my father offered himself, and was accepted mainly through the good offices of Captain Denis, our patron, whose ship was then in the Downs. Being at Paris, father must needs visit Alsace, our native country, and having scarce one guinea to rub against another, of course chose to fall in love with my mother and marry her out of hand. *Mons. mon père*, I fear, was but a prodigal; but he was his parents' only living child, and when he came home to Winchelsea, hungry and penniless, with a wife on his hand, they killed their fattest calf, and took both wanderers in. A short while after her marriage, my mother inherited some property from her parents in France, and most tenderly nursed my grandmother through a long illness, in which the good lady died. Of these matters I knew nothing personally, being at the time a child two or three years old; crying and sleeping, drinking and eating, growing, and having my infantile ailments, like other little darlings.

A violent woman was my mother, jealous, hot, and domineering, but generous and knowing how to forgive. I fancy my papa gave her too many opportunities of exercising this virtue, for, during his brief life, he was ever in scrapes and trouble. He met with an accident

* I remember a saying of G—— Aug-st-s S-lw-n, Esq., regarding the General, which has not been told, as far as I know, in the anecdotes. A Macaroni guardsman, speaking of Mr. Wolfe, asked, "Was he a Jew? Wolfe was a Jewish name." "Certainly," says Mr. S-lw-n, "Mr. Wolfe was the *Height of Abraham.*"

when fishing off the French coast, and was brought home and died, and was buried at Winchelsea; but the cause of his death I never knew until my good friend Sir Peter Denis told me in later years, when I had come to have troubles of my own.

I was born on the same day with his Royal Highness the Duke of York, viz. the 13th of August, 1763, and used to be called the Bishop of Osnaburg by the boys in Winchelsea, where between us French boys and the English boys I promise you there was many a good battle. Besides being *ancien* and precentor of the French church at Winchelsea, grandfather was a perruquier and barber by trade; and, if you must know it, I have curled and powdered a gentleman's head before this, and taken him by the nose and shaved him. I do not brag of having used lather and brush: but what is the use of disguising anything? *Tout se sçait*, as the French have it, and a great deal more too. There is Sir Humphrey Howard, who served with me second-lieutenant in the "Meleager"—he says he comes from the N—f-lk Howards; but his father was a shoemaker, and we always called him Humphrey Snob in the gunroom.

In France very few wealthy ladies are accustomed to nurse their children, and the little ones are put out to farmers' wives and healthy nurses, and perhaps better cared for than by their own meagre mothers. My mother's mother, an honest farmer's wife in Lorraine (for I am the first gentleman of my family, and chose my motto * of *facimus ipsi* not with pride, but with humble thanks for my good fortune), had brought up Mademoiselle Clarisse de Viomesnil, a Lorraine lady, between whom and her foster-sister there continued a tender friendship long after the marriage of both. Mother came to England, the wife of Monsieur mon papa; and Mademoiselle de Viomesnil married in her own country. She was of the Protestant branch of the Viomesnil family, and all the poorer in consequence of her parents' fidelity to their religion. Other members of the family were of the Catholic religion, and held in high esteem at Versailles.

Some short time after my mother's arrival in England, she heard that her dear foster-sister Clarisse was going to marry a Protestant gentleman of Lorraine, Vicomte de Barr, only son of M. le Comte de Saverne, a chamberlain to his Polish Majesty King Stanislas, father

* The Admiral insisted on taking or on a bend sable, three razors displayed proper, with the above motto. The family have adopted the mother's coat-of-arms.

of the French Queen. M. de Saverne, on his son's marriage, gave up to the Vicomte de Barr his house at Saverne, and here for a while the newly married couple lived. I do not say the young couple, for the Vicomte de Barr was five-and-twenty years older than his wife, who was but eighteen when her parents married her. As my mother's eyes were very weak, or, to say truth, she was not very skilful in reading, it used to be my lot as a boy to spell out my lady Viscountess's letters to her *sœur de lait*, her good Ursule: and many a smart rap with the rolling-pin have I had over my noddle from mother as I did my best to read. It was a word and a blow with mother. She did not spare the rod and spoil the child, and that I suppose is the reason why I am so well grown—six feet two in my stockings, and fifteen stone four last Tuesday, when I was weighed along with our pig. Mem.—My neighbour's hams at Rose Cottage are the best in all Hampshire.

I was so young that I could not understand all I read. But I remember mother used to growl in her rough way (she had a grenadier height and voice, and a pretty smart pair of black whiskers too)—my mother used to cry out, "She suffers—my Biche is unhappy—she has got a bad husband. He is a brute. All men are brutes." And with this she would glare at grandpapa, who was a very humble little man, and trembled before his *bru*, and obeyed her most obsequiously. Then mother would vow she would go home, she would go and succour her Biche; but who would take care of these two imbeciles? meaning me and my grandpapa. Besides, Madame Duval was wanted at home. She dressed many ladies' heads, with very great taste, in the French way, and could shave, frizz, cut hair, and tie a queue along with the best barber in the county. Grandfather and the apprentice wove the wigs; when I was at home, I was too young for that work, and was taken off from it, and sent to a famous good school, Pocock's grammar-school at Rye, where I learned to speak English like a Briton born as I am, and not as we did at home, where we used a queer Alsatian jargon of French and German. At Pocock's I got a little smattering of Latin, too, and plenty of fighting for the first month or two. I remember my patron coming to see me in uniform, blue and white laced with gold, silk stockings and white breeches, and two of his officers along with him. "Where is Denis Duval?" says he, peeping into our school-room, and all the boys looking round with wonder at the great gentleman. Master Denis Duval was standing on a bench at that very moment for punishment, for fighting I suppose,

with a black eye as big as an omelette. "Denis would do very well if he would keep his fist off other boys' noses," says the master; and the Captain gave me a seven-shilling piece, and I spent it all but twopence before the night was over, I remember. Whilst I was at Pocock's, I boarded with Mr. Rudge, a tradesman, who, besides being a grocer at Rye, was in the seafaring way, and part owner of a fishing-boat; and he took *some very queer fish* in his nets, as you shall hear soon. He was a chief man among the Wesleyans, and I attended his church with him, not paying much attention to those most serious and sacred things in my early years, when I was a thoughtless boy, caring for nothing but lollipops, hoops, and marbles.

Captain Denis was a very pleasant, lively gentleman, and on this day he asked the master, Mr. Coates, what was the Latin for a holiday, and hoped Mr. C. would give one to his boys. Of course we sixty boys shouted yes to that proposal; and as for me, Captain Denis cried out, "Mr. Coates, I *press* this fellow with the black eye here, and intend to take him to dine with me at the 'Star.'" You may be sure I skipped off my bench, and followed my patron. He and his two officers went to the "Star," and after dinner called for a crown bowl of punch, and though I would drink none of it, never having been able to bear the taste of rum or brandy, I was glad to come out and sit with the gentlemen, who seemed to be amused with my childish prattle. Captain Denis asked me what I learned, and I dare say I bragged of my little learning: in fact I remember talking in a pompous way about Corderius and Cornelius Nepos; and I have no doubt gave myself very grand airs. He asked whether I liked Mr. Rudge, the grocer with whom I boarded. I did not like him much, I said; but I hated Miss Rudge and Bevil the apprentice most because they were always . . . . here I stopped. "But there is no use in telling tales out of school," says I. "We don't do that at Pocock's, we don't."

And what was my grandmother going to make of me? I said I should like to be a sailor, but a gentleman sailor, and fight for King George. And if I did I would bring all my prize-money home to Agnes, that is, almost all of it—only keep a little of it for myself.

"And so you like the sea, and go out sometimes?" asks Mr. Denis.

Oh, yes, I went out fishing. Mr. Rudge had a half share of a boat along with grandfather, and I used to help to clean her, and

was taught to steer her, with many a precious slap on the head if I got her in the wind; and they said I was a very good look-out. I could see well, and remember bluffs and headlands and so forth; and I mentioned several places, points of our coasts, ay, and the French coast too.

"And what do you fish for?" asks the Captain.

"Oh, sir, I'm not to say anything about that, Mr. Rudge says!" on which the gentlemen roared with laughter. *They* knew Master Rudge's game, though I in my innocence did not understand it.

"And so you won't have a drop of punch?" asks Captain Denis.

"No, sir, I made a vow I would not, when I saw Miss Rudge so queer."

"Miss Rudge is often queer, is she?"

"Yes, the nasty pig! And she calls names, and slips downstairs, and knocks the cups and saucers about, and fights the apprentice, and—but I mustn't say anything more. I never tell tales, I don't!"

In this way I went on prattling with my patron and his friends, and they made me sing them a song in French, and a song in German, and they laughed and seemed amused at my antics and capers. Captain Denis walked home with me to our lodgings, and I told him how I liked Sunday the best day of the week—that is, every other Sunday—because I went away quite early, and walked three miles to mother and grandfather at Winchelsea, and saw Agnes.

And who, pray, was Agnes? To-day her name is Agnes Duval, and she sits at her work-table hard-by. The lot of my life has been changed by knowing her. To win such a prize in life's lottery is given but to very very few. What I have done (of any worth) has been done in trying to deserve her. I might have remained, but for her, in my humble native lot, to be neither honest nor happy, but that my good angel yonder succoured me. All I have I owe to her: but I pay with all I have, and what creature can do more?

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HOUSE OF SAVERNE.

MADEMOISELLE DE SAVERNE came from Alsace, where her family occupied a much higher rank than that held by the worthy Protestant elder from whom her humble servant is descended. Her mother was a Viomesnil, her father was of a noble Alsatian family, Counts of Barr and Saverne. The old Count de Saverne was alive, and a chamberlain in the court of his Polish Majesty good King Stanislas at Nanci, when his son the Vicomte de Barr, a man already advanced in years, brought home his blooming young bride to that pretty little capital.

The Count de Saverne was a brisk and cheery old gentleman, as his son was gloomy and severe. The Count's hotel at Nanci was one of the gayest of the little court. His Protestantism was by no means austere. He was even known to regret that there were no French convents for noble damsels of the Protestant confession, as there were across the Rhine, where his own two daughters might be bestowed out of the way. Mesdemoiselles de Saverne were ungainly in appearance, fierce and sour in temper, resembling, in these particulars, their brother Mons. le Baron de Barr.

In his youth, Monsieur de Barr had served not without distinction, being engaged against Messieurs the English at Hastenbeck and Laufeldt, where he had shown both courage and capacity. His Protestantism prevented his promotion in the army. He left it, steadfast in his faith, but soured in his temper. He did not care for whist or music, like his easy old father. His appearance at the count's little suppers was as cheerful as a death's-head at a feast. M. de Barr only frequented these entertainments to give pleasure to his young wife, who pined and was wretched in the solitary family mansion of Saverne, where the Vicomte took up his residence when first married.

He was of an awful temper, and subject to storms of passion. Being a very conscientious man, he suffered extremely after one of these ebullitions of rage. Between his alternations of anger and remorse,

his life was a sad one; his household trembled before him, and especially the poor little wife whom he had brought out of her quiet country village to be the victim of his rage and repentances. More than once she fled to the old Count of Saverne at Nanci, and the kindly selfish old gentleman used his feeble endeavours to protect his poor little daughter-in-law. Quickly after these quarrels letters would arrive, containing vows of the most abject repentance on the Baron's part. These matrimonial campaigns followed a regular course. First rose the outbreak of temper; then the lady's flight ensued to papa-in-law at Nanci; then came letters expressive of grief; then the repentant criminal himself arrived, whose anguish and cries of *mea culpa* were more insupportable than his outbreaks of rage. After a few years, Madame de Barr lived almost entirely with her father-in-law at Nanci, and was scarcely seen in her husband's gloomy mansion of Saverne.

For some years no child was born of this most unhappy union. Just when poor King Stanislas came by his lamentable death (being burned at his own fire), the old Count de Saverne died, and his son found that he inherited little more than his father's name and title of Saverne, the family estate being greatly impoverished by the late Count's extravagant and indolent habits, and much weighed down by the portions awarded to the Demoiselles de Saverne, the elderly sisters of the present elderly lord.

The town house at Nanci was shut up for a while; and the new Lord of Saverne retired to his castle with his sisters and his wife. With his Catholic neighbours the stern Protestant gentleman had little communion; and the society which frequented his dull house chiefly consisted of Protestant clergymen who came from the other side of the Rhine. Along its left bank, which had only become French territory of late years, the French and German languages were spoken indifferently; in the latter language M. de Saverne was called the Herr von Zabern. After his father's death, Herr von Zabern may have melted a little, but he soon became as moody, violent, and ill-conditioned as ever the Herr von Barr had been. Saverne was a little country town, with the crumbling old Hôtel de Saverne in the centre of the place, and a straggling street stretching on either side. Behind the house were melancholy gardens, squared and clipped after the ancient French fashion, and, beyond the garden wall, some fields and woods, part of the estate of the Saverne family.

These fields and woods were fringed by another great forest, which had once been the property of the house of Saverne, but had been purchased from the late easy proprietor by Messeigneurs de Rohan, Princes of the Empire, of France, and the Church, Cardinals, and Archbishops of Strasbourg, between whom and their gloomy Protestant neighbour there was no good-will. Not only questions of faith separated them, but questions of *chasse*. The Count de Saverne, who loved shooting, and beat his meagre woods for game with a couple of lean dogs, and a fowling-piece over his shoulder, sometimes came in sight of the grand hunting-parties of Monseigneur the Cardinal, who went to the chase like a Prince as he was, with piqueurs and horn-blowers, whole packs of dogs, and a troop of gentlemen in his uniform. Not seldom his Eminence's keepers and M. de Saverne's solitary garde-chasse had quarrels. "Tell your master that I will shoot any red-legs which come upon my land," M. de Saverne said in one of these controversies, as he held up a partridge which he had just brought down; and the keeper knew the moody nobleman would be true to his word.

Two neighbours so ill-disposed towards one another were speedily at law; and in the courts at Strasbourg a poor provincial gentleman was likely to meet with scanty justice when opposed to such a powerful enemy as the Prince Archbishop of the province, one of the greatest noblemen of the kingdom. Boundary questions, in a land where there are no hedges, game, forest, and fishery questions—how can I tell, who am no lawyer, what set the gentlemen at logger-heads? In later days I met one M. Georgel, an Abbé, who had been a secretary of the Prince Cardinal, and he told me that M. de Saverne was a headlong, violent, ill-conditioned little *mauvais coucheur*, as they say in France, and ready to quarrel with or without a reason.

These quarrels naturally took the Count de Saverne to his advocates and lawyers at Strasbourg, and he would absent himself for days from home, where his poor wife was perhaps not sorry to be rid of him. It chanced, on one of these expeditions to the chief town of his province, that he fell in with a former comrade in his campaigns of Hastenbeck and Laufeldt, an officer of Soubise's regiment, the Baron de la Motte.* La Motte had been destined to the Church,

* That unlucky Prince de Rohan was to suffer by another Delamotte, who, with his "Valois" of a wife, played such a notorious part in the famous "diamond necklace" business, but the two *worthies* were not, I believe, related.—D. D.

like many cadets of good family, but, his elder brother dying, he was released from the tonsure and the seminary, and entered the army under good protection. Mesdemoiselles de Saverne remembered this M. de la Motte at Nanci in old days. He bore the worst of characters; he was gambler, intriguer, duellist, profligate. I suspect that most gentlemen's reputations came off ill under the tongues of these old ladies, and have heard *of other countries* where *mesdemoiselles* are equally hard to please. "Well, have we not all our faults?" I imagine M. de Saverne saying, in a rage. "Is there no such thing as calumny? Are we never to repent, if we have been wrong? I know he has led a wild youth. Others may have done as much. But prodigals have been reclaimed ere now, and I for my part will not turn my back on this one." "Ah, I wish he had!" De la Motte said to me myself in later days, "but it was his fate, his fate!"

One day, then, the Count de Saverne returns home from Strasbourg with his new friend; presents the Baron de la Motte to the ladies of his house, makes the gloomy place as cheerful as he can for his guest, brings forth the best wine from his cave, and beats his best covers for game. I myself knew the Baron some years later;—a handsome, tall, sallow-faced man, with a shifty eye, a soft voice, and a grand manner. Monsieur de Saverne for his part was short, black, and ill-favoured, as I have heard my mother say. But Mrs. Duval did not love him, fancying that he ill-treated her Biche. Where she disliked people, my worthy parent would never allow them a single good quality; but she always averred that Monsieur de la Motte was a perfect fine gentleman.

The intimacy between these two gentlemen increased apace. M. de la Motte was ever welcome at Saverne: a room in the house was called his room: their visitor was an acquaintance of their enemy the Cardinal also, and would often come from the one château to the other. Laughingly he would tell how angry Monseigneur was with his neighbour. He wished he could make peace between the two houses. He gave quite good advice to Monsieur de Saverne, and pointed out the danger he ran in provoking so powerful an adversary. Men had been imprisoned for life for less reason. The Cardinal might get a *lettre de cachet* against his obstinate opponent. He could, besides, ruin Saverne with fines and law costs. The contest between the two was quite unequal, and the weaker party must inevitably be

crushed, unless these unhappy disputes should cease. As far as the ladies of the house dared speak, they coincided in the opinion of M. de la Motte, and were for submission and reconciliation with their neighbours. Madame de Saverne's own relations heard of the feud, and implored the Count to bring it to an end. It was one of these, the Baron de Viomesnil, going to command in Corsica, who entreated M. de Saverne to accompany him on the campaign. Anywhere the Count was safer than in his own house with an implacable and irresistible enemy at his gate. M. de Saverne yielded to his kinsman's importunities. He took down his sword and pistols of Laufeldt from the wall, where they had hung for twenty years. He set the affairs of his house in order, and after solemnly assembling his family, and on his knees confiding it to the gracious protection of heaven, he left home to join the suite of the French General.

A few weeks after he left home—several years after his marriage—his wife wrote to inform him that she was likely to be a mother. The stern man, who had been very unhappy previously, and chose to think that his wife's barrenness was a punishment of Heaven for some crime of his or hers, was very much moved by this announcement. I have still at home a German Bible which he used, and in which is written in the German a very affecting prayer composed by him, imploring the Divine blessing upon the child about to be born, and hoping that this infant might grow in grace, and bring peace and love and unity into the household. It would appear that he made no doubt he should have a son. His hope and aim were to save in every possible way for this child. I have read many letters of his which he sent from Corsica to his wife, and which she kept. They were full of strange minute orders, as to the rearing and education of this son that was to be born. He enjoined saving amounting to niggardliness in his household, and calculated how much might be put away in ten, in twenty years, so that the coming heir might have a property worthy of his ancient name. In case he should fall in action, he laid commands upon his wife to pursue a system of the most rigid economy, so that the child at coming of age might be able to appear creditably in the world. In these letters, I remember, the events of the campaign were dismissed in a very few words; the main part of the letters consisted of prayers, speculations, and prophecies regarding the child, and sermons couched in the language of the writer's stern creed. When the child was born, and a girl appeared in place of the boy, upon

whom the poor father had set his heart, I hear the family were so dismayed, that they hardly dared to break the news to the chief of the house.

Who told me? The same man who said he wished he had never seen M. de Saverne: the man for whom the unhappy gentleman had conceived a warm friendship;—the man who was to bring a mysterious calamity upon those whom, as I do think, and in his selfish way, he loved sincerely, and he spoke at a time when he could have little desire to deceive me.

The lord of the castle is gone on the campaign. The *châtelaine* is left alone in her melancholy tower with her two dismal duennas. My good mother, speaking in later days about these matters, took up the part of her Biche against the Ladies of Barr and their brother, and always asserted that the tyranny of the duennas, and the meddling, and the verbosity, and the ill temper of M. de Saverne himself, brought about the melancholy events which now presently ensued. The Count de Saverne was a little man (my mother said) who loved to hear himself talk, and who held forth from morning till night. His life was a fuss. He would weigh the coffee, and count the lumps of sugar, and have a finger in every pie in his frugal house. Night and morning he preached sermons to his family, and he continued to preach when not *en chaire*, laying down the law upon all subjects, untiringly voluble. Cheerfulness in the company of such a man was hypocrisy. Mesdames de Barr had to disguise weariness, to assume an air of contentment, and to appear to be interested when the Count preached. As for the Count's sisters, they were accustomed to listen to their brother and lord with respectful submission. They had a hundred domestic occupations: they had baking and boiling, and pickling, and washing, and endless embroidery: the life of the little château was quite supportable to them. They knew no better. Even in their father's days at Nanci, the ungainly women kept pretty much aloof from the world, and were little better than domestic servants in waiting on Monseigneur.

And Madame de Saverne, on her first entrance into the family, accepted the subordinate position meekly enough. She spun and she bleached, and she worked great embroideries, and busied herself about her house, and listened demurely whilst Monsieur le Comte was preaching. But then there came a time when her duties interested her no more, when his sermons became especially

wearisome, when sharp words passed between her and her lord, and the poor thing exhibited symptoms of impatience and revolt. And with the revolt arose awful storms and domestic battles; and after battles, submission, reconciliation, forgiveness, hypocrisy.

It has been said that Monsieur de Saverne loved the sound of his own croaking voice, and to hold forth to his own congregation. Night after night he and his friend M. de la Motte would have religious disputes together, in which the Huguenot gentleman flattered himself that he constantly had the better of the ex-pupil of the seminary. I was not present naturally, not setting my foot on French ground until five-and-twenty years after, but I can fancy Madame the Countess sitting at her tambour frame, and the old duenna ladies at their cards, and the combat of the churches going on between these two champions in the little old saloon of the Hôtel de Saverne. "As I hope for pardon," M. de la Motte said to me at a supreme moment of his life, "and to meet those whom on earth I loved, and made unhappy, no wrong passed between Clarisse and me, save that wrong which consisted in disguising from her husband the regard we had for one another. Once, twice, thrice, I went away from their house, but that unhappy Saverne would bring me back, and I was only too glad to return. I would let him talk for hours—I own it—so that I might be near Clarisse. I had to answer from time to time, and rubbed up my old seminary learning to reply to his sermons. I must often have spoken at random, for my thoughts were far away from the poor man's *radotages*, and he could no more change my convictions than he could change the colour of my skin. Hours and hours thus passed away. They would have been intolerably tedious to others: they were not so to me. I preferred that gloomy little château to the finest place in Europe. To see Clarisse, was all I asked. Denis! There is a power irresistible impelling all of us. From the moment I first set eyes on her, I knew she was my fate. I shot an English grenadier at Hastenbeck, who would have bayoneted poor Saverne but for me. As I lifted him up from the ground, I thought, 'I shall have to repent of ever having seen that man.' I felt the same thing, Duval, when I saw you." And as the unhappy gentleman spoke, I remembered how I for my part felt a singular and unpleasant sensation as of terror and approaching evil when first I looked at that handsome, ill-omened face.

I thankfully believe the words which M. de la Motte spoke to me

at a time when he could have no cause to disguise the truth; and am assured of the innocence of the Countess de Saverne. Poor lady! if she erred in thought, she had to pay so awful a penalty for her crime, that we humbly hope it has been forgiven her. She was not true to her husband, though she did him no wrong. If, while trembling before him, she yet had dissimulation enough to smile and be merry, I suppose no preacher or husband would be very angry with her for *that* hypocrisy. I have seen a slave in the West Indies soundly cuffed for looking sulky: we expect our negroes to be obedient and to be happy too.

Now when M. de Saverne went away to Corsica, I suspect he was strongly advised to take that step by his friend M. de la Motte. When he was gone, M. de la Motte did not present himself at the Hôtel de Saverne, where an old schoolfellow of his, a pastor and preacher from Kehl, on the German Rhine bank, was installed in command of the little garrison, from which its natural captain had been obliged to withdraw; but there is no doubt that poor Clarisse deceived this gentleman and her two sisters-in-law, and acted towards them with a very culpable hypocrisy.

Although there was a deadly feud between the two châteaux of Saverne—namely, the Cardinal's new-built castle in the Park, and the Count's hotel in the little town—yet each house knew more or less of the other's doings. When the Prince Cardinal and his court were at Saverne, Mesdemoiselles de Barr were kept perfectly well informed of all the festivities which they did not share. In our little Fareport here, do not the Miss Prys, my neighbours, know what I have for dinner, the amount of my income, the price of my wife's last gown, and the items of my son's, Captain Scapegrace's, tailor's bill. No doubt the ladies of Barr were equally well informed of the doings of the Prince Coadjutor and his court. Such gambling, such splendour, such painted hussies from Strasbourg, such plays, masquerades, and orgies as took place in that castle! Mesdemoiselles had the very latest particulars of all these horrors, and the Cardinal's castle was to them as the castle of a wicked ogre. From her little dingy tower at night Madame de Saverne could look out, and see the Cardinal's sixty palace windows all a-flame. Of summer nights, gusts of unhallowed music would be heard from the great house, where dancing festivals, theatrical pieces even, were performed. Though Madame de Saverne was forbidden by her husband to frequent those assemblies,

the townspeople were up to the palace from time to time, and Madame could not help hearing of the doings there. In spite of the Count's prohibition, his gardener poached in the Cardinal's woods; one or two of the servants were smuggled in to see a fête or a ball; then Madame's own woman went; then Madame herself began to have a wicked longing to go, as Madame's first ancestress had for the fruit of the forbidden tree. Is not the apple always ripe on that tree, and does not the tempter for ever invite you to pluck and eat? Madame de Saverne had a lively little waiting-maid, whose bright eyes loved to look into neighbours' parks and gardens, and who had found favour with one of the domestics of the Prince Archbishop. This woman brought news to her mistress of the feasts, balls, banquets, nay, comedies, which were performed at the Prince Cardinal's. The Prince's gentlemen went hunting in his uniform. He was served on plate, and a lacquey in his livery stood behind each guest. He had the French comedians over from Strasbourg. Oh! that M. de Molière was a droll gentleman, and how grand the "Cid" was!

Now, to see these plays and balls, Martha, the maid, must have had intelligence in and out of both the houses of Saverne. She must have deceived those old dragons, Mesdemoiselles. She must have had means of creeping out at the gate, and silently creeping back again. She told her mistress everything she saw, acted the plays for her, and described the dresses of the ladies and gentlemen. Madame de Saverne was never tired of hearing her maid's stories. When Martha was going to a fête, Madame lent her some little ornament to wear, and yet when Pasteur Schnorr and Mesdemoiselles talked of the proceedings at Great Saverne, and as if the fires of Gomorrah were ready to swallow up that palace, and all within it, the Lady of Saverne sat demurely in silence, and listened to their croaking and sermons. Listened? The pastor exhorted the household, the old ladies talked night after night, and poor Madame de Saverne never heeded. Her thoughts were away in Great Saverne; her spirit was for ever hankering about those woods. Letters came now and again from M. de Saverne, with the army. They had been engaged with the enemy. Very good. He was unhurt. Heaven be praised! And then the grim husband read his poor little wife a grim sermon; and the grim sisters and the chaplain commented on it. Once, after an action at Calvi, Monsieur de Saverne, who was always specially lively

in moments of danger, described how narrowly he had escaped with his life, and the chaplain took advantage of the circumstance, and delivered to the household a prodigious discourse on death, on danger, on preservation here and hereafter, and alas, and alas! poor Madame de Saverne found that she had not listened to a word of the homily. Her thoughts were not with the preacher, nor with the captain of Viomesnil's regiment before Calvi; they were in the palace at Great Saverne, with the balls, and the comedies, and the music, and the fine gentlemen from Paris and Strasbourg, and out of the Empire beyond the Rhine, who frequented the Prince's entertainments.

What happened where the wicked spirit was whispering, "Eat," and the tempting apple hung within reach? One night when the household was at rest, Madame de Saverne, muffled in cloak and calash, with a female companion similarly disguised, tripped silently out of the back gate of the Hôtel de Saverne, found a carriole in waiting, with a driver who apparently knew the road and the passengers he was to carry, and after half-an-hour's drive through the straight avenues of the park of Great Saverne, alighted at the gates of the château, where the driver gave up the reins of the carriole to a domestic in waiting, and, by doors and passages which seemed perfectly well known to him, the coachman and the two women entered the castle together and found their way to a gallery in a great hall, in which many lords and ladies were seated, and at the end of which was a stage, with a curtain before it. Men and women came backwards and forwards on this stage, and recited dialogue in verses. O mercy! it was a comedy they were acting, one of those wicked delightful plays which she was forbidden to see, and which she was longing to behold! After the comedy was to be a ball, in which the actors would dance in their stage habits. Some of the people were in masks already, and in that box near to the stage, surrounded by a little crowd of dominoes, sate Monseigneur the Prince Cardinal himself. Madame de Saverne had seen him and his cavalcade sometimes returning from hunting. She would have been as much puzzled to say what the play was about as to give an account of Pasteur Schnorr's sermon a few hours before. But Frontin made jokes with his master Damis; and Géronte locked up the doors of his house, and went to bed grumbling; and it grew quite dark, and Mathurine flung a rope-ladder out of window, and she and her mistress Elmire came

down the ladder; and Frontin held it, and Elmire, with a little cry, fell into the arms of Mons. Damis; and master and man, and maid and mistress, sang a merry chorus together, in which human frailty was very cheerfully depicted; and when they had done, away they went to the gondola which was in waiting at the canal stairs, and so good night. And when old Géronte, wakened up by the disturbance, at last came forth in his nightcap, and saw the boat paddling away out of reach, you may be sure that the audience laughed at the poor impotent raging old wretch. It was a very merry play indeed, and is still popular and performed in France and elsewhere.

After the play came a ball. Would Madame dance? Would the noble Countess of Saverne dance with a coachman? There were others below on the dancing-floor dressed in mask and domino as she was. Who ever said she had a mask and domino? You see it has been stated that she was muffled in cloak and calash. Well, is not a domino a cloak? and has it not a hood or calash appended to it? and, pray, do not women wear masks at home as well as at the Ridotto?

Another question arises here. A high-born lady entrusts herself to a charioteer, who drives her to the castle of a prince her husband's enemy. Who was her companion? Of course he could be no other than that luckless Monsieur de la Motte. He had never been very far away from Madame de Saverne since her husband's departure. In spite of chaplains, and duennas, and guards, and locks and keys, he had found means of communicating with her. How? By what lies and stratagems? By what arts and bribery? These poor people are both gone to their account. Both suffered a fearful punishment. I will not describe their follies, and don't care to be Mons. Figaro, and hold the ladder and lantern, while the count scales Rosina's window. Poor, frightened erring soul! She suffered an awful penalty for what, no doubt, was a great wrong.

A child almost, she was married to M. de Saverne, without knowing him, without liking him, because her parents ordered her, and because she was bound to comply with their will. She was sold, and went to her slavery. She lived at first obediently enough. If she shed tears, they were dried; if she quarrelled with her husband, the two were presently reconciled. She bore no especial malice, and was as gentle, subordinate a slave as ever you shall see in Jamaica or Barbadoes. Nobody's tears were sooner dried, as I should judge: none would be more ready to kiss the hand of the overseer who drove

her. But you don't expect sincerity and subservience too. I know, for my part, a lady who only obeys when she likes: and faith! it may be it is *I* who am the hypocrite, and have to tremble, and smile, and swindle before *her*.

When Madame de Saverne's time was nearly come, it was ordered that she should go to Strasbourg, where the best medical assistance is to be had: and here, six months after her husband's departure for Corsica, their child, Agnes de Saverne, was born.

Did secret terror and mental disquietude and remorse now fall on the unhappy lady? She wrote to my mother, at this time her only confidante (and yet not a confidante of all!)—"O Ursule! I dread this event. Perhaps I shall die. I think I hope I shall. In these long days, since he has been away, I have got so to dread his return, that I believe I shall go mad when I see him. Do you know, after the battle before Calvi, when I read that many officers had been killed, I thought, is M. de Saverne killed? And I read the list down, and his name was not there: and, my sister, my sister, I was not glad! Have I come to be such a monster as to wish my own husband . . . No. I wish I was. I can't speak to M. Schnorr about this. He is so stupid. He doesn't understand me. He is like my husband; for ever preaching me his sermons.

"Listen, Ursule! Speak it to nobody! I have been to hear a sermon. Oh, it was indeed divine! It was not from one of our pastors. Oh, how they weary me! It was from a good bishop of the *French* Church—not our *German* Church—the Bishop of Amiens —who happens to be here on a visit to the Cardinal Prince. The bishop's name is *M. de la Motte*. He is a relative of a gentleman of whom we have seen a great deal lately—of a great friend of M. de Saverne, *who saved my husband's life* in the battle M. de S. is always talking about.

"How beautiful the cathedral is! It was night when I went. The church was lighted like the stars, and the music was like *Heaven*. Ah, how different from M. Schnorr at home, from—from somebody *else* at my new home who is *always* preaching—that is, when he is at home! Poor man! I wonder whether he preaches to them in Corsica! I pity them if he does. Don't mention the cathedral if you write to me. The dragons don't know anything about it. How they would scold if they did! Oh, how they ennuyent me, the dragons! Behold them! They think I am writing to my husband.

Ah, Ursule! When I write to him, I sit for hours before the paper. I say nothing; and what I say seems to be lies. Whereas when I write to you, my pen runs—runs! The paper is covered before I think I have begun. So it is when I write to . . . . I do believe that *vilain dragon* is peering at my note with her spectacles! Yes, my good sister, I am writing to M. le Comte!"

To this letter a postscript is added, as by the countess's command, in the German language, in which Madame de Saverne's medical attendant announces the birth of a daughter, and that the child and mother are doing well.

That daughter is sitting before me now—with spectacles on nose too—very placidly spelling the Portsmouth paper, where I hope she will soon read the promotion of Monsieur Scapegrace, her son. She has exchanged her noble name for mine, which is only humble and honest. My dear! your eyes are not so bright as once I remember them, and the raven locks are streaked with silver. To shield thy head from dangers has been the blessed chance and duty of my life. When I turn towards her, and see her moored in our harbour of rest, after our life's chequered voyage, calm and happy, a sense of immense gratitude fills my being, and my heart says a hymn of praise.

The first days of the life of Agnes de Saverne were marked by incidents which were strangely to influence her career. Around her little cradle a double, a triple tragedy was about to be enacted. Strange that death, crime, revenge, remorse, mystery, should attend round the cradle of one so innocent and pure—as pure and innocent, I pray Heaven now, as upon that day when, at scarce a month old, the adventures of her life began.

That letter to my mother, written by Madame de Saverne on the eve of her child's birth, and finished by her attendant, bears date November 25, 1768. A month later Martha Seebach, her attendant, wrote (in German) that her mistress had suffered frightfully from fever; so much so that her reason left her for some time, and her life was despaired of. Mesdemoiselles de Barr were for bringing up the child by hand; but not being versed in nursery practices, the infant had ailed sadly until restored to its mother. Madame de Saverne was now tranquil. Madame was greatly better. She had suffered most fearfully. In her illness she was constantly calling for her foster-sister to protect her from some danger, which, as she appeared to fancy, menaced Madame.

Child as I was at the time when these letters were passing, I remember the arrival of the next. It lies in yonder drawer, and was written by a poor fevered hand which is now cold, in ink which is faded after fifty years.* I remember my mother screaming out in German, which she always spoke when strongly moved, "Dear Heaven, my child is mad—is mad!" And indeed that poor faded letter contains a strange rhapsody.

"Ursule!" she wrote (I do not care to give at length the words of the poor wandering creature), "after my child was born the demons wanted to take her from me. But I struggled and kept her quite close, and now they can no longer hurt her. I took her to church. Martha went with me, and He was there—he always is—to defend me from the demons, and I had her christened Agnes, and I was christened Agnes too. Think of my being christened at twenty-two! Agnes the First, and Agnes the Second. But though my name is changed, I am always the same to my Ursule, and my name now is, Agnes Clarisse de Saverne, born de Viomesnil."

She had actually, when not quite mistress of her own reason, been baptized into the Roman Catholic Church with her child. Was she sane when she so acted? Had she thought of the step before taking it? Had she known Catholic clergymen at Saverne, or had she other reasons for her conversion than those which were furnished in the conversations which took place between her husband and M. de la Motte? In this letter the poor lady says, "Yesterday two persons came to my bed with gold crowns round their heads. One was dressed like a priest; one was beautiful and covered with arrows, and they said, 'We are Saint Fabian and Saint Sebastian; and to-morrow is the day of St. Agnes: and she will be at church to receive you there.'"

What the real case was I never knew. The Protestant clergyman whom I saw in after days could only bring his book to show that he had christened the infant, not Agnes, but Augustine. Martha Seebach is dead. La Motte, when I conversed with him, did not touch upon this part of the poor lady's history. I conjecture that the images and pictures which she had seen in the churches operated upon her fevered brain; that, having procured a Roman Calendar

* The memoirs appear to have been written in the years '20, '21. Mr. Duval was gazetted Rear-Admiral and K.C.B. in the promotions on the accession of King George IV.

and Missal, she knew saints' days and feasts; and, not yet recovered from her delirium or quite responsible for the actions which she performed, she took her child to the cathedral, and was baptized there.

And now, no doubt, the poor lady had to practise more deceit and concealment. The "demons" were the old maiden sisters left to watch over her. She had to hoodwink these. Had she not done so before—when she went to the Cardinal's palace at Saverne? Wherever the poor thing moved I fancy those ill-omened eyes of La Motte glimmering upon her out of the darkness. Poor Eve—not lost quite, I pray and think,—but that serpent was ever trailing after her, and she was to die poisoned in its coil. Who shall understand the awful ways of Fate? A year after that period regarding which I write, a lovely Imperial Princess rode through the Strasbourg streets radiant and blushing, amidst pealing bells, roaring cannon, garlands and banners, and shouting multitudes. Did any one ever think that the last stage of that life's journey was to be taken in a hideous tumbrel, and to terminate on a scaffold? The life of Madame de Saverne was to last but a year more, and her end to be scarcely less tragical.

Many physicians have told me how often after the birth of a child the brain of a mother will be affected. Madame de Saverne remained for some time in this febrile condition, if not unconscious of her actions, at least not accountable for all of them. At the end of three months she woke up as out of a dream, having a dreadful recollection of the circumstances which had passed. Under what hallucinations we never shall know, or yielding to what persuasions, the wife of a stern Protestant nobleman had been to a Roman Catholic church, and had been christened there with her child. She never could recall that step. A great terror came over her as she thought of it—a great terror and a hatred of her husband, the cause of all her grief and her fear. She began to look out lest he should return; she clutched her child to her breast, and barred and bolted all doors for fear people should rob her of the infant. The Protestant chaplain, the Protestant sisters-in-law, looked on with dismay and anxiety; they thought justly that Madame de Saverne was not yet quite restored to her reason; they consulted the physicians, who agreed with them; who arrived, who prescribed; who were treated by the patient with scorn, laughter, insult sometimes; sometimes with tears

and terror, according to her wayward mood. Her condition was most puzzling. The sisters wrote from time to time guarded reports respecting her to her husband in Corsica. He, for his part, replied instantly with volumes of his wonted verbose commonplace. He acquiesced in the decrees of Fate, when informed that a daughter was born to him; and presently wrote whole reams of instructions regarding her nurture, dress, and physical and religious training. The child was called Agnes? He would have preferred Barbara, as being his mother's name. I remember in some of the poor gentleman's letters there were orders about the child's pap, and instructions as to the nurse's diet. He was coming home soon. The Corsicans had been defeated in every action. Had he been a Catholic he would have been a knight of the King's orders long ere this. M. de Viomesnil hoped still to get for him the order of Military Merit (the Protestant order which his Majesty had founded ten years previously). These letters (which were subsequently lost by an accident at sea*) spoke modestly enough of the Count's personal adventures. I hold him to have been a very brave man, and only not tedious and prolix when he spoke of his own merits and services.

The Count's letters succeeded each other post after post. The end of the war was approaching, and with it his return was assured. He exulted in the thought of seeing his child, and leading her in the way she should go—the right way, the true way. As the mother's brain cleared, her terror grew greater—her terror and loathing of her husband. She could not bear the thought of his return, or to face him with the confession which she knew she must make. His wife turn Catholic and baptize his child? She felt he would kill her, did he know what had happened. She went to the priest who had baptized her. M. Georgel (his Eminence's secretary) knew her husband. The Prince Cardinal was so great and powerful a prelate, Georgel said, that he would protect her against all the wrath of all the Protestants in France. I think she must have had interviews with the Prince Cardinal, though there is no account of them in any letter to my mother.

The campaign was at an end. M. de Vaux, M. de Viomesnil, both wrote in highly eulogistic terms of the conduct of the Count de Saverne.

* The letters from *Madame de Saverne* to my mother at Winchelsea were not subject to this mishap, but were always kept by Madame Duval in her own escritoire.

Their good wishes would attend him home; Protestant as he was their best interest should be exerted in his behalf.

The day of the Count's return approached. The day arrived: I can fancy the brave gentleman with beating heart ascending the steps of the homely lodging where his family have been living at Strasbourg ever since the infant's birth. How he has dreamt about that child: prayed for her and his wife at night-watch and bivouac—prayed for them as he stood, calm and devout, in the midst of battle. . . . .

When he enters the room, he sees only two frightened domestics and the two ghastly faces of his scared old sisters.

"Where are Clarisse and the child?" he asks.

The child and the mother were gone. The aunts knew not where.

A stroke of palsy could scarcely have smitten the unhappy gentleman more severely than did the news which his trembling family was obliged to give him. In later days I saw M. Schnorr, the German pastor from Kehl, who has been mentioned already, and who was installed in the Count's house as tutor and chaplain during the absence of the master. "When Madame de Saverne went to make her *coucher* at Strasbourg" (M. Schnorr said to me), "I retired to my duties at Kehl, glad enough to return to the quiet of my home, for the noble lady's reception of me was anything but gracious; and I had to endure much female sarcasm and many unkind words from Madame la Comtesse, whenever, as in duty bound, I presented myself at her table. Sir, that most unhappy lady used to make sport of me before her domestics. She used to call me her gaoler. She used to mimic my ways of eating and drinking. She would yawn in the midst of my exhortations, and cry out, 'O que c'est bête!' and when I gave out a Psalm, would utter little cries, and say, 'Pardon me, M. Schnorr, but you sing so out of tune you make my head ache;' so that I could scarcely continue that portion of the service, the very domestics laughing at me when I began to sing. My life was a martyrdom, but I bore my tortures meekly, out of a sense of duty and my love for M. le Comte. When her ladyship kept her chamber I used to wait almost daily upon Mesdemoiselles the Count's sisters, to ask news of her and her child. I christened the infant; but her mother was too ill to be present, and sent me out word by Mademoiselle Marthe that *she* should call the child Agnes, though I might name it what I pleased. This was on the 21st January, and I

remember being struck, because in the Roman Calendar the feast of St. Agnes is celebrated on that day.

"Haggard and actually grown grey, from a black man which he was, my poor lord came to me with wildness and agony of grief in all his features and actions, to announce to me that Madame the Countess had fled, taking her infant with her. And he had a scrap of paper with him, over which he wept and raged as one demented; now pouring out fiercer imprecations, now bursting into passionate tears and cries, calling upon his wife, his darling, his prodigal, to come back, to bring him his child, when all should be forgiven. As he thus spoke his screams and groans were so piteous, that I myself was quite unmanned, and my mother, who keeps house for me (and who happened to be listening at the door), was likewise greatly alarmed by my poor lord's passion of grief. And when I read on that paper that my lady countess had left the faith to which our fathers gloriously testified in the midst of trouble, slaughter, persecution, and bondage, I was scarcely less shocked than my good lord himself.

"We crossed the bridge to Strasbourg back again and went to the Cathedral Church, and entering there, we saw the Abbé Georgel coming out of a chapel where he had been to perform his devotions. The Abbé, who knew me, gave a ghastly smile as he recognized me, and for a pale man, his cheek blushed up a little when I said, 'This is Monsieur the Comte de Saverne.'

"'Where is she?' asked my poor lord, clutching the Abbé's arm.

"'Who?' asked the Abbé, stepping back a little.

"'Where is my child? where is my wife?' cries the Count.

"'Silence, Monsieur!' says the Abbé. 'Do you know in whose house you are?' and the chant from the altar, where the service was being performed, came upon us, and smote my poor lord as though a shot had struck him. We were standing, he tottering against a pillar in the nave, close by the christening font, and over my lord's head was a picture of Saint Agnes.

"The agony of the poor gentleman could not but touch any one who witnessed it. 'M. le Comte,' says the Abbé, 'I feel for you. This great surprise has come upon you unprepared—I—I pray that it may be for your good.'

"'You know, then, what has happened?' asked M. de Saverne; and the Abbé was obliged to stammer a confession that he *did* know

what had occurred. He was, in fact, the very man who had performed the rite which separated my unhappy lady from the church of her fathers.

"'Sir,' he said, with some spirit, 'this was a service which no clergyman could refuse. I would to heaven, Monsieur, that you, too, might be brought to ask it from me.'

"The poor Count, with despair in his face, asked to see the register which confirmed the news, and there we saw that on the 21st January, 1769, being the Feast of St. Agnes, the noble lady, Clarisse, Countess of Saverne, born de Viomesnil, aged twenty-two years, and Agnes, only daughter of the same Count of Saverne and Clarisse his wife, were baptized and received into the Church in the presence of two witnesses (clerics) whose names were signed.

"The poor Count knelt over the registry book with an awful grief in his face, and in a mood which I heartily pitied. He bent down, uttering what seemed an imprecation rather than a prayer, and at this moment it chanced the service at the chief altar was concluded, and Monseigneur and his suite of clergy came into the sacristy. Sir, the Count de Saverne, starting up, clutching his sword in his hand, and shaking his fist at the Cardinal, uttered a wild speech calling down imprecations upon the church of which the prince was a chief: 'Where is my lamb that you have taken from me?' he said, using the language of the Prophet towards the King who had despoiled him.

"The Cardinal haughtily said the conversion of Madame de Saverne was of heaven, and no act of his, and, adding, 'Bad neighbour as you have been to me, sir, I wish you so well that I hope you may follow her.'

"At this the Count, losing all patience, made a violent attack upon the Church of Rome, denounced the Cardinal, and called down maledictions upon his head; said that a day should come when his abominable pride should meet with a punishment and fall; and spoke, as, in fact, the poor gentleman was able to do only too readily and volubly, against Rome and all its errors.

"The Prince Louis de Rohan replied with no little dignity, as I own. He said that such words in such a place were offensive and out of all reason: that it only depended on him to have M. de Saverne arrested, and punished for blasphemy and insult to the Church: but that, pitying the Count's unhappy condition, the Cardinal would forget the hasty and insolent words he had uttered—

as he would know how to defend Madame de Saverne and her child after the righteous step which she had taken. And he swept out of the sacristy with his suite, and passed through the door which leads into his palace, leaving my poor count still in his despair and fury.

"As he spoke with those Scripture phrases which M. de Saverne ever had at command, I remember how the Prince Cardinal tossed up his head and smiled. I wonder whether he thought of the words when his own day of disgrace came, and the fatal affair of the diamond necklace which brought him to ruin." *

"Not without difficulty" (M. Schnorr resumed) "I induced the poor Count to quit the church where his wife's apostasy had been performed. The outer gates and walls are decorated with numberless sculptures of saints of the Roman Calendar: and for a minute or two the poor man stood on the threshold shouting imprecations in the sunshine, and calling down woe upon France and Rome. I hurried him away. Such language was dangerous, and could bring no good to either of us. He was almost a madman when I conducted him back to his home, where the ladies his sisters, scared with his wild looks, besought me not to leave him.

"Again he went into the room which his wife and child had inhabited, and, as he looked at the relics of both which still were left there, gave way to bursts of grief which were pitiable indeed to witness. I speak of what happened near forty years ago, and remember the scene as though yesterday: the passionate agony of the poor gentleman, the sobs and prayers. On a chest of drawers there was a little cap belonging to the infant. He seized it: kissed it: wept over it: calling upon the mother to bring the child back and he would forgive all. He thrust the little cap into his breast: opened every drawer, book, and closet, seeking for some indications of the fugitives. My opinion was, and that even of the ladies, sisters of M. le Comte, that Madame had taken refuge in a convent with the child, that the Cardinal knew where she was, poor and friendless, and that the Protestant gentleman would in vain seek for her. Perhaps when tired of that place—I for my part thought Madame

* My informant, Protestant though he was, did not, as I remember, speak with very much asperity against the Prince Cardinal. He said that the prince lived an edifying life after his fall, succouring the poor, and doing everything in his power to defend the cause of royalty.—D. D.

la Comtesse a light-minded, wilful person, who certainly had no *vocation*, as the Catholics call it, for a religious life—I thought she might come out after a while, and gave my patron such consolation as I could devise, upon this faint hope. He who was all forgiveness at one minute, was all wrath at the next. He would rather see his child dead than receive her as a Catholic. He would go to the King, surrounded by harlots as he was, and ask for justice. There were still Protestant gentlemen left in France, whose spirit was not altogether trodden down, and they would back him in demanding reparation for this outrage.

"I had some vague suspicion, which, however, I dismissed from my mind as unworthy, that there might be a third party cognizant of Madame's flight; and this was a gentleman, once a great favourite of M. le Comte, and in whom I myself was not a little interested. Three or four days after the Comte de Saverne went away to the war, as I was meditating on a sermon which I proposed to deliver, walking at the back of my lord's house of Saverne, in the fields which skirt the wood where the Prince Cardinal's great Schloss stands, I saw this gentleman with a gun over his shoulder, and recognized him—the Chevalier de la Motte, the very person who had saved the life of M. de Saverne in the campaign against the English.

"M. de la Motte said he was staying with the Cardinal, and trusted that the ladies of Saverne were well. He sent his respectful compliments to them: in a laughing way said he had been denied the door when he came to a visit, which he thought was an unkind act towards an old comrade; and at the same time expressed his sorrow at the Count's departure—'for, Herr Pfarrer,' said he, 'you know I am a good Catholic, and in many most important conversations which I had with the Comte de Saverne, the differences between our two churches was the subject of our talk, and I do think I should have converted him to ours.' I, humble village pastor as I am, was not afraid to speak in such a cause, and we straightway had a most interesting conversation together, in which, as the gentleman showed, I had not the worst of the argument. It appeared he had been educated for the Roman Church, but afterwards entered the army. He was a most interesting man, and his name was le Chevalier de la Motte. You look as if you had known him, M. le Capitaine—will it please you to replenish your pipe, and take another glass of my beer?"

I said I had *effectivement* known M. de la Motte; and the good old clergyman (with many compliments to me for speaking French and German so glibly) proceeded with his artless narrative: "I was ever a poor horseman: and when I came to be chaplain and major-domo at the Hôtel de Saverne, in the Count's absence, Madame more than once rode entirely away from me, saying that she could not afford to go at my clerical jog-trot. And being in a scarlet amazon, and a conspicuous object, you see, I thought I saw her at a distance talking to a gentleman on a schimmel horse, in a grass-green coat. When I asked her to whom she spoke, she said, 'M. le Pasteur, you radotez with your grey horse and your green coat! If you are set to be a spy over me, ride faster, or bring out the old ladies to bark at your side.' The fact is, the Countess was for ever quarrelling with those old ladies, and they were a yelping ill-natured pair. They treated me, a pastor of the Reformed Church of the Augsburg Confession, as no better than a lacquey, sir, and made me eat the bread of humiliation; whereas Madame la Comtesse, though often haughty, flighty, and passionate, could also be so winning and gentle, that no one could resist her. Ah, sir!" said the pastor, "that woman had a coaxing way with her when she chose, and when her flight came I was in such a way that the jealous old sister-in-laws said I was in love with her myself. Pfui! For a month before my lord's arrival I had been knocking at all doors to see if I could find my poor wandering lady behind them. She, her child, and Martha her maid, were gone, and we knew not whither.

"On that very first day of his unhappy arrival, M. le Comte discovered what his sisters, jealous and curious as they were, what I, a man of no inconsiderable acumen, had failed to note. Amongst torn papers and chiffons, in her ladyship's bureau, there was a scrap with one line in her handwriting—'*Ursule, Ursule, le tyran rev. . . .*' and no more.

"'Ah!' M. le Comte said, 'she is gone to her foster-sister in England! Quick, quick, horses!' And before two hours were passed he was on horseback, making the first stage of that long journey."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE TRAVELLERS.

THE poor gentleman was in such haste that the old proverb was realized in his case, and his journey was anything but speedy. At Nanci he fell ill of a fever, which had nearly carried him off, and in which he unceasingly raved about his child, and called upon his faithless wife to return her. Almost before he was convalescent, he was on his way again, to Boulogne, where he saw that English coast on which he rightly conjectured his fugitive wife was sheltered.

And here, from my boyish remembrance, which, respecting these early days, remains extraordinarily clear, I can take up the story, in which I was myself a very young actor, playing in the strange, fantastic, often terrible, drama which ensued a not insignificant part. As I survey it now, the curtain is down, and the play long over; as I think of its surprises, disguises, mysteries, escapes, and dangers, I am amazed myself, and sometimes inclined to be almost as great a fatalist as M. de la Motte, who vowed that a superior Power ruled our actions for us, and declared that he could no more prevent his destiny from accomplishing itself, than he could prevent his hair from growing. What a destiny it was! What a fatal tragedy was now about to begin!

One evening in our Midsummer holidays, in the year 1769, I remember being seated in my little chair at home, with a tempest of rain beating down the street. We had customers on most evenings, but there happened to be none on this night; and I remember I was puzzling over a bit of Latin grammar, to which mother used to keep me stoutly when I came home from school.

It is fifty years since.* I have forgotten who knows how many events of my life, which are not much worth the remembering; but I have as clearly before my eyes now a little scene which occurred on this momentous night, as though it had been acted within this hour. As we are sitting at our various employments, we hear steps coming

* The narrative seems to have been written about the year 1820.

up the street, which was empty, and silent but for the noise of the wind and rain. We hear steps—several steps—along the pavement, and they stop at our door.

"Madame Duval! It is Gregson!" cries a voice from without.

"Ah, bon Dieu!" says mother, starting up and turning quite white.

And then I heard the cry of an infant. Dear heart! How well I remember that little cry!

As the door opens, a great gust of wind sets our two candles flickering, and I see enter——

A gentleman giving his arm to a lady who is veiled in cloaks and wraps, an attendant carrying a crying child, and Gregson the boatman after them.

My mother gives a great hoarse shriek, and crying out, "Clarisse! Clarisse!" rushes up to the lady, and hugs and embraces her passionately. The child cries and wails. The nurse strives to soothe the infant. The gentleman takes off his hat and wrings the wet from it, and looks at me. It was then I felt a strange shock and terror. I have felt the same shock once or twice in my life: and once, notably, the person so affecting me has been my enemy, and has come to a dismal end.

"We have had a very rough voyage," says the gentleman (in French) to my grandfather. "We have been fourteen hours at sea. Madame has suffered greatly, and is much exhausted."

"Thy rooms are ready," says mother, fondly. "My poor Biche, thou shalt sleep in comfort to-night, and need fear nothing, nothing!"

A few days before I had seen mother and her servant mightily busy in preparing the rooms on the first floor, and decorating them. When I asked whom she was expecting, she boxed my ears, and bade me be quiet; but these were evidently the expected visitors; and, of course, from the names which mother used, I knew that the lady was the Countess of Saverne.

"And this is thy son, Ursule?" says the lady. "He is a great boy! My little wretch is always crying."

"Oh, the little darling," says mother, seizing the child, which fell to crying louder than ever, "scared by the nodding plume and bristling crest" of Madame Duval, who wore a great cap in those days, and indeed looked as fierce as any Hector.

When the pale lady spoke so harshly about the child, I remember myself feeling a sort of surprise and displeasure. Indeed, I have

loved children all my life, and am a fool about them (as witness my treatment of my own rascal), and no one can say that I was ever a tyrant at school, or ever fought there except to hold my own.

My mother produced what food was in the house, and welcomed her guests to her humble table. What trivial things remain impressed on the memory! I remember laughing in my boyish way because the lady said, "Ah! c'est ça du thé? je n'en ai jamais goûté. Mais c'est très mauvais, n'est-ce pas, M. le Chevalier?" I suppose they had not learned to drink tea in Alsace yet. Mother stopped my laughing with her usual appeal to my ears. I was daily receiving that sort of correction from the good soul. Grandfather said, If Madame the Countess would like a little tass of real Nantes brandy after her voyage, he could supply her; but she would have none of that either, and retired soon to her chamber, which had been prepared for her with my mother's best sheets and diapers, and in which was a bed for her maid Martha, who had retired to it with the little crying child. For M. le Chevalier de la Motte an apartment was taken at Mr. Billis's the baker's, down the street:—a friend who gave me many a plum-cake in my childhood, and whose wigs grandfather dressed, if you must know the truth.

At morning and evening we used to have prayers, which grandfather spoke with much eloquence; but on this night, as he took out his great Bible, and was for having me read a chapter, my mother said, "No. This poor Clarisse is fatigued, and will go to bed." And to bed accordingly the stranger went. And as I read my little chapter, I remember how tears fell down mother's cheeks, and how she cried, "Ah, mon Dieu, mon Dieu! ayez pitié d'elle," and when I was going to sing our evening hymn, "Nun ruhen alle Wälder," she told me to hush. Madame upstairs was tired, and wanted to sleep. And she went upstairs to look after Madame, and bade me be a little guide to the strange gentleman, and show him the way to Billis's house. Off I went, prattling by his side; I dare say I soon forgot the terror which I felt when I first saw him. You may be sure all Winchelsea knew that a French lady, and her child, and her maid, were come to stay with Madame Duval, and a French gentleman to lodge over the baker's.

I never shall forget my terror and astonishment when mother told me that this lady who came to us was a Papist. There were two gentlemen of that religion living in our town, at a handsome house

called the Priory; but they had little to do with persons in my parents' humble walk of life, though of course my mother would dress Mrs. Weston's head as well as any other lady's. I forgot also to say that Mrs. Duval went out sometimes as ladies' nurse, and in that capacity had attended Mrs. Weston, who, however, lost her child. The Westons had a chapel in their house, in the old grounds of the Priory, and clergymen of their persuasion used to come over from my Lord Newburgh's of Slindon, or from Arundel, where there is another great Papist house; and one or two Roman Catholics—there were very few of them in our town—were buried in a part of the old gardens of the Priory, where a monks' burying-place had been before Harry VIII.'s time.

The new gentleman was the first Papist to whom I had ever spoken; and as I trotted about the town with him, showing him the old gates, the church, and so forth, I remember saying to him, "And have you burned any Protestants?"

"Oh, yes!" says he, giving a horrible grin, "I have roasted several, and eaten them afterwards." And I shrank back from him, and his pale grinning face; feeling once more that terror which had come over me when I first beheld him. He was a queer gentleman; he was amused by my simplicity and odd sayings. He was never tired of having me with him. He said I should be his little English master; and indeed he learned the language surprisingly quick, whereas poor Madame de Saverne never understood a word of it.

She was very ill—pale, with a red spot on either cheek, sitting for whole hours in silence, and looking round frightened, as if a prey to some terror. I have seen my mother watching her, and looking almost as scared as the countess herself. At times, Madame could not bear the crying of the child, and would order it away from her. At other times, she would clutch it, cover it with cloaks, and lock her door, and herself into the chamber with her infant. She used to walk about the house of a night. I had a little room near mother's, which I occupied during the holidays, and on Saturdays and Sundays, when I came over from Rye. I remember quite well waking up one night, and hearing Madame's voice at mother's door, crying out, "Ursula, Ursula! quick! horses! I must go away. He is coming; I know he is coming!" And then there were remonstrances on mother's part, and Madame's maid came out of her room, with entreaties to her mistress to return. At the cry of the child, the poor mother

would rush away from whatever place she was in, and hurry to the infant. Not that she loved it. At the next moment she would cast the child down on the bed, and go to the window again, and look to the sea. For hours she sat at that window, with a curtain twisted round her, as if hiding from some one. Ah! how have I looked up at that window since, and the light twinkling here! I wonder does the house remain yet? I don't like now to think of the passionate grief I have passed through, as I looked up to yon glimmering lattice.

It was evident our poor visitor was in a deplorable condition. The apothecary used to come and shake his head, and order medicine. The medicine did little good. The sleeplessness continued. She was a prey to constant fever. She would make incoherent answers to questions put to her, laugh and weep at odd times and places; push her meals away from her, though they were the best my poor mother could supply; order my grandfather to go and sit in the kitchen, and not have the impudence to sit down before her; coax and scold my mother by turns, and take her up very sharply when she rebuked me. Poor Madame Duval was scared by her foster-sister. She, who ruled everybody, became humble before the poor crazy lady. I can see them both now, the lady in white, listless and silent as she would sit for hours taking notice of no one, and mother watching her with terrified dark eyes.

The Chevalier de la Motte had his lodgings, and came and went between his house and ours. I thought he was the lady's cousin. He used to call himself her cousin; I did not know what our pastor M. Borel meant when he came to mother one day, and said, "Fi, donc, what a pretty business thou hast commenced, Madame Denis—thou an elder's daughter of our Church!"

"What business?" says mother.

"That of harbouring crime and sheltering iniquity," says he, naming the crime, viz. No. VII. of the Decalogue.

Being a child, I did not then understand the word he used. But as soon as he had spoken, mother, taking up a saucepan of soup, cries out, "Get out of there, Monsieur, all pastor as you are, or I will send this soup at thy ugly head, and the saucepan afterwards." And she looked so fierce, that I am not surprised the little man trotted off.

Shortly afterwards grandfather comes home, looking almost as frightened as his *commanding officer*, M. Borel. Grandfather expos-

tulated with his daughter-in-law. He was in a great agitation. He wondered how she could speak so to the pastor of the Church. "All the town," says he, "is talking about you and this unhappy lady."

"All the town is an old woman," replies Madame Duval, stamping her foot and *twisting her moustache*, I might say, almost. "What? These white-beaks of French cry out because I receive my foster-sister? What? It is wrong to shelter a poor foolish dying woman? Oh, the cowards, the cowards! Listen, petit-papa: if you hear a word said at the club against your *bru*, and do not knock the man down, I will." And, faith, I think grandfather's *bru* would have kept her word.

I fear my own unlucky simplicity brought part of the opprobrium down upon my poor mother, which she had now to suffer in our French colony; for one day a neighbour, Madame Crochu by name, stepping in and asking, "How is your boarder, and how is her cousin the Count?" —

"Madame Clarisse is no better than before," said I (shaking my head wisely), "and the gentleman is not a count, and he is not her cousin, Madame Crochu!"

"Oh, he is no relation?" says the mantuamaker. And that story was quickly told over the little town, and when we went to church next Sunday, M. Borel preached a sermon which made all the congregation look to us, and poor mother sat boiling red like a lobster fresh out of the pot. I did not quite know what I had done: I know what mother was giving me for my pains, when our poor patient, entering the room, hearing, I suppose, the hissing of the stick (and never word from me, I used to bite a bullet, and hold my tongue), rushed into the room, whisked the cane out of mother's hand, flung her to the other end of the room with a strength quite surprising, and clasped me up in her arms and began pacing up and down the room, and glaring at mother. "Strike your own child, monster, monster!" says the poor lady. "Kneel down and ask pardon: or, as sure as I am the queen, I will order your head off!"

At dinner, she ordered me to come and sit by her. "Bishop!" she said to grandfather, "my lady of honour has been naughty. She whipped the little prince with a scorpion. I took it from her hand. Duke! if she does it again, there is a sword: I desire you to cut the countess's head off!" And then she took a carving-knife and waved it, and gave one of her laughs, which always set poor mother a-crying.

She used to call us dukes and princes—I don't know what—poor soul. It was the Chevalier de la Motte, whom she generally styled duke, holding out her hand, and saying, "Kneel, sir, kneel, and kiss our royal hand." And M. de la Motte would kneel with a sad sad face, and go through this hapless ceremony. As for grandfather, who was very bald, and without his wig, being one evening below her window culling a salad in his garden, she beckoned him to her smiling, and when the poor old man came, she upset a dish of tea over his bald pate and said, "I appoint you and anoint you Bishop of St. Denis!"

The woman Martha, who had been the companion of the Countess de Saverne in her unfortunate flight from home—I believe that since the birth of her child the poor lady had never been in her right senses at all—broke down under the ceaseless watching and care her mistress's condition necessitated, and I have no doubt found her duties yet more painful and difficult when a second mistress, and a very harsh, imperious, and jealous one, was set over her in the person of worthy Madame Duval. My mother was for ordering everybody who would submit to her orders, and entirely managing the affairs of all those whom she loved. She put the mother to bed, and the baby in her cradle; she prepared food for both of them, dressed one and the other with an equal affection, and loved that unconscious mother and child with a passionate devotion. But she loved her own way, was jealous of all who came between her and the objects of her love, and no doubt led her subordinates an uncomfortable life.

Three months of Madame Duval tired out the Countess's Alsatian maid, Martha. She revolted and said she would go home. Mother said she was an ungrateful wretch, but was delighted to get rid of her. She always averred the woman stole articles of dress, and trinkets, and laces, belonging to her mistress, before she left us: and in an evil hour this wretched Martha went away. I believe she really loved her mistress, and would have loved the child, had my mother's rigid arms not pushed her from its cot. Poor little innocent, in what tragic gloom did thy life begin! But an unseen Power was guarding that helpless innocence: and sure a good angel watched it in its hour of danger!

So Madame Duval turned Martha out of her tent as Sarah thrust out Hagar. Are women pleased after doing these pretty tricks? Your ladyships know best. Madame D. not only thrust out Martha, but flung stones after Martha all her life. She went away, not blameless

perhaps, but wounded to the quick with ingratitude which had been shown to her, and a link in that mysterious chain of destiny which was binding *all* these people—me the boy of seven years old ; yonder little speechless infant of as many months ; that poor wandering lady bereft of reason ; that dark inscrutable companion of hers who brought evil with him wherever he came.

From Dungeness to Boulogne is but six-and-thirty miles, and our boats, when war was over, were constantly making journeys there. Even in war-time the little harmless craft left each other alone, and, I suspect, carried on a great deal of peaceable and fraudulent trade together. Grandfather had share of a "fishing" boat with one Thomas Gregson of Lydd. When Martha was determined to go, one of our boats was ready to take her to the place from whence she came, or transfer her to a French boat, which would return into its own harbour.* She was carried back to Boulogne and landed. I know the day full well from a document now before me, of which the dismal writing and signing were occasioned by that very landing.

As she stepped out from the pier (a crowd of people, no doubt, tearing the poor wretch's slender luggage from her to carry it to the *Customs*) almost the first person on whom the woman's eyes fell was her master the Count de Saverne. He had actually only reached the place on that very day, and walked the pier, looking towards England, as many a man has done from the same spot, when he saw the servant of his own wife come up the side of the pier.

He rushed to her, as she started back screaming and almost fainting, but the crowd of beggars behind her prevented her retreat. "The child,—does the child live?" asked the poor Count, in the German tongue, which both spoke.

The child was well. Thank God, thank God ! The poor father's heart was freed from *that* terror, then ! I can fancy the gentleman saying, "Your mistress is at Winchelsea, with her foster-sister?"

"Yes, M. le Comte."

"The Chevalier de la Motte is always at Winchelsea?"

"Ye—oh, no, no, M. le Comte !"

"Silence, liar ! He made the journey with her. They stopped at the same inns. M. le Brun, merchant, aged 34 ; his sister, Madame

* There were points for which our boats used to make, and meet the French boats when not disturbed, and do a great deal more business than I could then understand.—D. D.

Dubois, aged 24, with a female infant in her arms, and a maid, left this port, on 20th April, in the English fishing-boat 'Mary,' of Rye. Before embarking they slept at the 'Ecu de France.' I knew I should find them."

"By all that is sacred, I never left Madame once during the voyage!"

"Never till to-day? Enough. How was the fishing-boat called which brought you to Boulogne?"

One of the boat's crew was actually walking behind the unhappy gentleman at the time, with some packet which Martha had left in it.* It seemed as if fate was determined upon suddenly and swiftly bringing the criminal to justice, and under the avenging sword of the friend he had betrayed. He bade the man follow him to the hotel. There should be a good drink-money for him.

"Does he treat her well?" asked the poor gentleman, as he and the maid walked on.

"Dame! No mother can be more gentle than he is with her!" Where Martha erred was in not saying that her mistress was utterly deprived of reason, and had been so almost since the child's birth. She owned that she had attended her lady to the cathedral when the Countess and the infant were christened, and that M. de la Motte was also present. "He has taken body and soul too," no doubt the miserable gentleman thought.

He happened to alight at the very hotel where the fugitives of whom he was in search had had their quarters four months before (so that for two months at least poor M. de Saverne must have lain ill at Nanci at the commencement of his journey). The boatman, the luggage people, and Martha the servant followed the Count to this hotel; and the femme-de-chambre remembered how Madame Dubois and her brother had been at the hotel—a poor sick lady, who sat up talking the whole night. Her brother slept in the right wing across the court. Monsieur has the lady's room. How that child did cry! See, the windows look on the port. "Yes, this was the lady's room."

"And the child lay on which side?"

"On that side."

M. de Saverne looked at the place which the woman pointed out, stooped his head towards the pillow, and cried as if his heart would

* I had this from the woman herself, whom we saw when we paid our visit to Lorraine and Alsace in 1814.

break. The fisherman's tears rolled down too over his brown face and hands. *Le pauvre homme, le pauvre homme!*

"Come into my sitting-room with me," he said to the fisherman. The man followed him and shut the door.

His burst of feeling was now over. He became entirely calm.

"You know the house from which this woman came, at Winchelsea, in England?"

"Yes."

"You took a gentleman and a lady thither?"

"Yes."

"You remember the man?"

"Perfectly."

"For thirty louis will you go to sea to-night, take a passenger, and deliver a letter to M. de la Motte?"

The man agreed: and I take out from my secretary that letter, in its tawny ink of fifty years' date, and read it with a strange interest always:—

"*To the* CHEVALIER FRANÇOIS JOSEPH DE LA MOTTE, *at Winchelsea, in England.*

"I KNEW I should find you. I never doubted where you were. But for a sharp illness which I made at Nanci, I should have been with you two months earlier. After what has occurred between us, I know this invitation will be to you as a command, and that you will hasten as you did to my rescue from the English bayonets at Hastenbeck. Between us, M. le Chevalier, it is to life or death. I depend upon you to communicate this to no one, and to follow the messenger, who will bring you to me.

"COUNT DE SAVERNE."

This letter was brought to our house one evening as we sat in the front shop. I had the child on my knee, which would have no other playfellow but me. The Countess was pretty quiet that evening—the night calm, and the windows open. Grandfather was reading his book. The Countess and M. de la Motte were at cards, though, poor thing, she could scarce play for ten minutes at a time; and there comes a knock, at which grandfather puts down his book.*

* There was a particular knock, as I learned later, in use among grandpapa's private friends, and Mons. Bidois no doubt had this signal.

"All's well," says he. "Entrez. Comment! c'est vous, Bidois?"

"Oui, c'est bien moi, patron!" says Mons. Bidois, a great fellow in boots and petticoat, with an eelskin queue hanging down to his heels. "C'est là le petit du pauv' Jean Louis? Est i genti le pti patron!"

And as he looks at me, he rubs a hand across his nose.

At this moment Madame la Comtesse gave one, two, three screams, a laugh, and cries—"Ah, c'est mon mari qui revient de la guerre. Il est là—à la croisée. Bon jour, M. le Comte! Bon jour. Vous avez une petite fille bien laide, bien laide, que je n'aime pas du tout, pas du tout, pas du tout! He is there! I saw him at the window. There! there! Hide me from him. He will kill me, he will kill me!" she cried.

"Calmez-vous, Clarisse," says the Chevalier, who was weary, no doubt, of the poor lady's endless outcries and follies.

"Calmez-vous, ma fille!" sings out mother, from the inner room, where she was washing.

"Ah, Monsieur is the Chevalier de la Motte?" says Bidois.

"Après Monsieur," says the Chevalier, looking haughtily up from the cards.

"In that case, I have a letter for M. le Chevalier." And the sailor handed to the Chevalier de la Motte that letter which I have translated, the ink of which was black and wet then, though now it is sere and faded.

This Chevalier had faced death and danger in a score of daredevil expeditions. At the game of steel and lead there was no cooler performer. He put the letter which he had received quietly into his pocket, finished his game with the Countess, and telling Bidois to follow him to his lodgings, took leave of the company. I daresay the poor Countess built up a house with the cards, and took little more notice. Mother, going to close the shutters, said, "It was droll, that little man, the friend to Bidois, was still standing in the street." You see we had all sorts of droll friends. Seafaring men, speaking a jargon of English, French, Dutch, were constantly dropping in upon us. Dear heaven! when I think in what a company I have lived, and what a *galère* I rowed in, is it not a wonder that I did not finish where some of my friends did?

I made a *drôle de métier* at this time. I was set by grandfather to learn his business. Our apprentice taught me the commencement of

the noble art of wig-weaving. As soon as I was tall enough to stand to a gentleman's nose I was promised to be *promoted* to be a shaver. I trotted on mother's errands with her bandboxes, and what not; and I was made dry-nurse to poor Madame's baby, who, as I said, loved me most of all in the house; and who would put her little dimpled hands out and crow with delight to see me. The first day I went out with this little baby in a little wheel-chair mother got for her the town boys made rare fun of me: and I had to fight one, as poor little Agnes sat sucking her little thumb in her chair, I suppose; and whilst the battle was going on, who should come up but Doctor Barnard, the English rector of Saint Philip's, who lent us French Protestants the nave of his church for our service, whilst our tumble-down old church was being mended. Doctor Barnard (for a reason which I did not know at that time, but which I am compelled to own now was a good one) did not like grandfather, nor mother, nor our family. You may be sure our people abused him in return. He was called a haughty priest—a vilain beeg-veeg, mother used to say, in her French-English. And perhaps one of the causes of her dislike to him was, that his *big vig*—a fine cauliflower it was—was powdered at another barber's. Well, whilst the battle royal was going on between me and Tom Caffin (dear heart! how well I remember the fellow, though—let me see—it is fifty-four years since we punched each other's little noses), Doctor Barnard walks up to us boys and stops the fighting. "You little rogues! I'll have you all put in the stocks and whipped by my beadle," says the Doctor, who was a magistrate too: "as for this little French barber, he is always in mischief."

"They laughed at me and called me Dry-nurse, and wanted to upset the little cart, sir, and I wouldn't bear it. And it's my duty to protect a poor child that can't help itself," said I, very stoutly. "Her mother is ill. Her nurse has run away, and she has nobody—nobody to protect her but me—and 'Notre Père qui est aux cieux;'" and I held up my little hand as grandfather used to do; "and if those boys hurt the child I *will* fight for her."

The Doctor rubbed his hand across his eyes; and felt in his pocket and gave me a dollar.

"And come to see us all at the Rectory, child," Mrs. Barnard says, who was with the Doctor; and she looked at the little baby that was in its cot, and said, "Poor thing, poor thing!"

And the Doctor, turning round to the English boys, still holding

me by the hand, said, "Mind, all you boys! If I hear of you being such cowards again as to strike this little lad for doing his duty, I will have you whipped by my beadle, as sure as my name is Thomas Barnard. Shake hands, you Thomas Caffin, with the French boy;" and I said, "I would shake hands or fight it out whenever Tom Caffin liked;" and so took my place as pony again, and pulled my little cart down Sandgate.

These stories got about amongst the townspeople, and fishermen, and seafaring folk, I suppose, and the people of our little circle; and they were the means, God help me, of bringing me in those very early days *a legacy* which I have still. You see, the day after Bidois, the French fisherman, paid us a visit, as I was pulling my little cart up the hill to a little farmer's house where grandfather and a partner of his had some pigeons, of which I was very fond as a boy, I met a little dark man whose face I cannot at all recall to my mind, but who spoke French and German to me like grandfather and mother. "That is the child of Madame von Zabern?" says he, trembling very much.

"Ja, Herr!" says the little boy. . . . .

O Agnes, Agnes! How the years roll away! What strange events have befallen us: what passionate griefs have we had to suffer: what a merciful heaven has protected us, since that day when your father knelt over the little car, in which his child lay sleeping! I have the picture in my mind now. I see a winding road leading down to one of the gates of our town; the blue marsh-land, and yonder, across the marsh, Rye towers and gables; a great silver sea stretching beyond; and that dark man's figure stooping and looking at the child asleep. He never kissed the infant or touched her. I remember it woke smiling, and held out its little arms, and he turned away with a sort of groan.

Bidois, the French fisherman I spoke of as having been to see us on the night before, came up here with another companion, an Englishman I think.

"Ah! we seek for you everywhere, Monsieur le Comte," says he. "The tide serves and it is full time."

"Monsieur le Chevalier is on board?" says the Count de Saverne.

"Il est bien là," says the fisherman. And they went down the hill through the gate, without turning to look back.

Mother was quite quiet and gentle all that day. It seemed as if something scared her. The poor Countess prattled and laughed, or cried in her unconscious way. But grandfather at evening prayer that night making the exposition rather long, mother stamped her foot, and said, "Assez bavardé comme ça, mon père," and sank back in her chair with her apron over her face.

She remained all next day very silent, crying often, and reading in our great German Bible. She was kind to me that day. I remember her saying, in her deep voice, "Thou art a brave boy, Denikin." It was seldom she patted my head so softly. That night our patient was very wild; and laughing a great deal, and singing so that the people would stop in the streets to listen.

Doctor Barnard again met me that day, dragging my little carriage, and he fetched me into the Rectory for the first time, and gave me cake and wine, and the book of the "Arabian Nights," and the ladies admired the little baby, and said it was a pity it was a little Papist, and the Doctor hoped *I* was not going to turn Papist, and I said, "Oh, never." Neither mother nor I liked that darkling Roman Catholic clergyman who was fetched over from our neighbours at the Priory by M. de la Motte. The Chevalier was very firm himself in that religion. I little thought then that I was to see him on a day when his courage and his faith were both to have an awful trial.

. . . I was reading then in this fine book of Monsieur Galland which the Doctor had given me. I had no orders to go to bed, strange to say, and I dare say was peeping into the cave of the Forty Thieves along with Master Ali Baba, when I heard the clock whirring previously to striking twelve, and steps coming rapidly up our empty street.

Mother started up, looking quite haggard, and undid the bolt of the door.

"C'est lui!" says she, with her eyes starting, and the Chevalier de la Motte came in, looking as white as a corpse.

Poor Madame de Saverne upstairs, awakened by the striking clock perhaps, began to sing overhead, and the Chevalier gave a great start, looking more ghastly than before, as my mother with an awful face looked at him.

"Il l'a voulu," says M. de la Motte, hanging down his head; and again poor Madame's crazy voice began to sing.

## Report.

"On the 27th June of this year, 1769, the Comte de Saverne arrived at Boulogne-sur-Mer, and lodged at the Ecu de France, where also was staying M. le Marquis du Quesne Menneville, Chef d'Escadre of the Naval Armies of his Majesty. The Comte de Saverne was previously unknown to the Marquis du Quesne, but recalling to M. du Quesne's remembrance the fact that his illustrious ancestor the Admiral Duquesne professed the Reformed religion, as did M. de Saverne himself, M. de Saverne entreated the Marquis du Quesne to be his friend in a rencontre which deplorable circumstances rendered unavoidable.

"At the same time, M. de Saverne stated to M. le Marquis du Quesne the causes of his quarrel with the Chevalier Francis Joseph de la Motte, late officer of the regiment of Soubise, at present residing in England in the town of Winchelsea, in the county of Sussex. The statement made by the Comte de Saverne was such as to convince M. du Quesne of the Count's right to exact a reparation from the Chevalier de la Motte.

"A boat was despatched on the night of the 29th June, with a messenger bearing the note of M. le Comte de Saverne. And in this boat M. de la Motte returned from England.

"The undersigned Comte de Bérigny, in garrison at Boulogne, and an acquaintance of M. de la Motte, consented to serve as his witness in the meeting with M. de Saverne.

"The meeting took place at seven o'clock in the morning, on the sands at half a league from the port of Boulogne: and the weapons chosen were pistols. Both gentlemen were perfectly calm and collected, as one might expect from officers distinguished in the King's service, who had faced the enemies of France as comrades together.

"Before firing, M. le Chevalier de la Motte advanced four steps, and holding his pistol down, and laying his hand on his heart, he said,—'I swear on the faith of a Christian, and the honour of a gentleman, that I am innocent of the charge laid against me by Monsieur de Saverne.'

"The Comte de Saverne said,—'M. le Chevalier de la Motte, I have made no charge; and if I had, a lie costs you nothing.'

"M. de la Motte, saluting the witnesses courteously, and with

grief rather than anger visible upon his countenance, returned to his line on the sand which was marked out as the place where he was to stand, at a distance of ten paces from his adversary.

"At the signal being given both fired simultaneously. The ball of M. de Saverne grazed M. de la Motte's side-curl, while his ball struck M. de Saverne in the right breast. M. de Saverne stood a moment, and fell.

"The seconds, the surgeon, and M. de la Motte advanced towards the fallen gentleman; and M. de la Motte, holding up his hand, again said,—'I take heaven to witness the person is innocent.'

"The Comte de Saverne seemed to be about to speak. He lifted himself from the sand, supporting himself on one arm: but all he said was,—'You, you——' and a great issue of blood rushed from his throat, and he fell back, and, with a few convulsions, died.

(Signed) "MARQUIS DU QUESNE MENNEVILLE,
"*Chef d'Escadre aux Armées Navales du Roy.*

"COMTE DE BÉRIGNY,
"*Brigadier de Cavaleric.*"

## Surgeon's Report.

"I, JEAN BATISTE DROUOT, Surgeon-Major of the Regiment Royal Cravate, in garrison at Boulogne-sur-Mer, certify that I was present at the meeting which ended so lamentably. The death of the gentleman who succumbed was immediate; the ball, passing to the right of the middle of the breastbone, penetrated the lung and the large artery supplying it with blood, and caused death by immediate suffocation."

LAST MOMENTS OF THE COUNT DE SAVERNE.

## CHAPTER IV.

### OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

THAT last night which he was to pass upon earth, M. de Saverne spent in a little tavern in Winchelsea, frequented by fishing people, and known to Bidois, who, even during the war, was in the constant habit of coming to England upon errands in which Mons. Grandpapa was very much interested—precentor, elder, perruquier as he was.

The Count de Saverne had had some talk with the fisherman during the voyage from Boulogne, and more conversation took place on this last night, when the Count took Bidois partly into his confidence: and, without mentioning the precise cause of his quarrel with M. de la Motte, said that it was inevitable; that the man was a villain who ought not to be allowed to pollute the earth; and that no criminal was ever more righteously executed than this chevalier would be on the morrow, when it was agreed that the two were to meet.

The meeting would have taken place on that very night, but M. de la Motte demanded, as indeed he had a right to do, some hours for the settlement of his own affairs; and preferred to fight on French ground rather than English, as the survivor of the quarrel would be likely to meet with very rough treatment in this country.

La Motte betook himself then to arranging his papers. As for the Count de Saverne, he said all his dispositions were made. A dowry,—that which his wife brought—would go to her child. His own property was devised to his own relations, and he could give the child nothing. He had only a few pieces in his purse, and, "Tenez," says he, "this watch. Should anything befall me, I desire it may be given to the little boy who saved my—that is, her child." And the voice of M. le Comte broke as he said these words, and the tears ran over his fingers. And the seaman wept too, as he told the story to me years after, nor were some of mine wanting, I think, for that poor heart-broken, wretched man, writhing in helpless agony, as the hungry sand drank his blood. Assuredly, the guilt of that blood was on thy head, Francis de la Motte.

The watch is ticking on the table before me as I write. It has been my companion for half a century. I remember my childish delight when Bidois brought it to me, and told my mother the tale of the meeting of the two gentlemen.

"You see her condition," M. de la Motte said to my mother at this time. "We are separated for ever, as hopelessly as though one or other were dead. My hand slew her husband. Perhaps my fault destroyed her reason. I transmit misfortunes to those I love and would serve. Shall I marry her? I will if you think I can serve her. As long as a guinea remains to me, I will halve it with her. I have but very few left now. My fortune has crumbled under my hands, as have my friendships, my once bright prospects, my ambitions. I am a doomed man: somehow, I drag down those who love me into my doom."

And so indeed there was a *Cain mark*, as it were, on this unhappy man. He *did* bring wreck and ruin on those who loved him. He was as a lost soul, I somehow think, whose tortures had begun already. Predestined to evil, to crime, to gloom; but now and again some one took pity upon this poor wretch, and amongst those who pitied him was my stern mother.

And here I may relate how it happened that I "saved" the child, for which act poor M. de Saverne rewarded me. Bidois no doubt told that story to M. le Comte in the course of their gloomy voyage. Mrs. Martha, the Countess's attendant, had received or taken leave of absence one night, after putting the child and the poor lady, who was no better than a child, to bed. I went to my bed, and to sleep as boys sleep; and I forget what business called away my mother likewise, but when she came back to look for her poor Biche and the infant in its cradle—both were gone.

I have seen the incomparable Siddons, in the play, as, white and terrified, she passed through the darkened hall after King Duncan's murder. My mother's face wore a look of terror to the full as tragical, when, starting up from my boyish sleep, I sat up in my bed and saw her. She was almost beside herself with terror. The poor insane lady and her child were gone—who could say where? Into the marshes—into the sea—into the darkness—it was impossible to say whither the Countess had fled.

"We must get up, my boy, and find them," says mother, in a hoarse voice; and I was sent over to Mr. Bliss's the grocer, in East

reet, where the Chevalier lived, and where I found him sitting (with vo priests, by the way, guests, no doubt, of Mr. Weston, at the riory), and all these, and mother, on her side, with me following her, ent out to look for the fugitives.

We went by pairs, taking different roads. Mother's was the right ne as it appeared, for we had not walked many minutes, when we aw a white figure coming towards us, glimmering out of the dark, nd heard a voice singing.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" says mother, and "Gott sey dank," and I now not what exclamations of gratitude and relief. It was the oice of the Countess.

As we came up, she knew us with our light, and began to imitate, n her crazy way, the cry of the watchman, whom the poor sleepless soul had often heard under the windows. "Past twelve o'clock, a starlight night!" she sang, and gave one of her sad laughs.

When we came up to her, we found her in a white wrapper, her hair flowing down her back and over her poor pale face, and again she sang, "Past twelve o'clock."

*The child was not with her.* Mother trembled in every limb. The antern shook so in her hand I thought she would drop it.

She put it down on the ground. She took her shawl off her back, and covered the poor lady with it, who smiled in her childish way, and said, "C'est bon; c'est chaud ça; ah! que c'est bien!"

As I chanced to look down at the lady's feet, I saw one of them was naked. Mother, herself in a dreadful agitation, embraced and soothed Madame de Saverne. "Tell me, my angel, tell me, my love, where is the child?" says mother, almost fainting.

"The child, what child? That little brat who always cries? I know nothing about children," says the poor thing. "Take me to my bed this moment, madam! How dare you bring me into the streets with naked feet!"

"Where have you been walking, my dear?" says poor mother, trying to soothe her.

"I have been to Great Saverne. I wore a domino. I knew the coachman quite well, though he was muffled up all but his nose. I was presented to Monseigneur the Cardinal. I made him such a curtsey—like this. Oh, my foot hurts me!"

She often rambled about this ball and play, and hummed snatches of tunes and little phrases of dialogue, which she may have

heard there. Indeed, I believe it was the only play and ball the poor thing ever saw in her life; her brief life, her wretched life. 'Tis pitiful to think how unhappy it was. When I recall it, it tears my heart-strings somehow, as it doth to see a child in pain.

As she held up the poor bleeding foot, I saw that the edge of her dress was all wet, and covered *with sand.*

"Mother, mother!" said I, "she has been to the sea!"

"Have you been to the sea, Clarisse?" asks mother.

"J'ai été au bal: j'ai dansé; j'ai chanté. J'ai bien reconnu mon cocher. J'ai été au bal chez le Cardinal. But you must not tell M. de Saverne. Oh, no, you mustn't tell him!"

A sudden thought came to me. And, whenever I remember it, my heart is full of thankfulness to the gracious Giver of all good thoughts. Madame, of whom I was not afraid, and who sometimes was amused by my prattle, would now and then take a walk accompanied by Martha her maid, who held the infant, and myself, who liked to draw it in its little carriage. We used to walk down to the shore, and there was a rock there, on which the poor lady would sit for hours.

"You take her home, mother," says I, all in a tremble. "You give me the lantern, and I'll go—I'll go"—I was off before I said where. Down I went, through Westgate; down I ran along the road towards the place I guessed at. When I had gone a few hundred yards, I saw in the road something white. It was *the Countess's slipper*, that she had left there. I knew she had gone that way.

I got down to the shore, running, running with all my little might. The moon had risen by this time, shining gloriously over a great silver sea. A tide of silver was pouring in over the sand. Yonder was that rock where we often had sat. The infant was sleeping on it under the stars unconscious. He, Who loves little children, had watched over it . . . . I scarce can see the words as I write them down. My little baby was waking. She had known nothing of the awful sea coming nearer with each wave; but she knew me as I came, and smiled, and warbled a little infant welcome. I took her up in my arms, and trotted home with my pretty burden. As I paced up the hill, M. de la Motte and one of the French clergymen met me. By ones and twos, the other searchers after my little wanderer came home from their quest. She was laid in her little crib, and never knew, until years later, the danger from which she had been rescued.

My adventures became known in our town, and I made some acquaintances who were very kind to me, and were the means of advancing me in after-life. I was too young to understand much what was happening round about me; but now, if the truth must be told, I must confess that old grandfather, besides his business of perruquier, which you will say is no very magnificent trade, followed others which were far less reputable. What do you say, for instance, of a church elder, who lends money *à la petite semaine*, and at great interest? The fishermen, the market-people, nay, one or two farmers and gentlemen round about, were beholden to grandfather for supplies, and they came to him, to be *shaved* in more ways than one. No good came out of his gains, as I shall presently tell: but meanwhile his hands were for ever stretched out to claw other folks' money towards himself; and it must be owned that *madame sa bru* loved a purse too, and was by no means scrupulous as to the way of filling it. Monsieur le Chevalier de la Motte was free-handed and grand in his manner. He paid a pension, I know not how much, for the maintenance of poor Madame de Saverne. He had brought her to the strait in which she was, poor thing. Had he not worked on her, she never would have left her religion: she never would have fled from her husband: that fatal duel would never have occurred: right or wrong, he was the cause of her calamity, and he would make it as light as it might be. I know how, for years, extravagant and embarrassed as he was, he yet supplied means for handsomely maintaining the little Agnes when she was presently left an orphan in the world, when mother and father both were dead, and her relatives at home disowned her.

The ladies of Barr, Agnes's aunts, totally denied that the infant was their brother's child, and refused any contribution towards her maintenance. Her mother's family equally disavowed her. They had been taught the same story, and I suppose we believe willingly enough what we wish to believe. The poor lady was guilty. Her child had been born in her husband's absence. When his return was announced, she fled from her home, not daring to face him; and the unhappy Count de Saverne died by the pistol of the man who had already robbed him of his honour. La Motte had to bear this obloquy, or only protest against it by letters from England. He could not go over to Lorraine, where he was plunged in debt. "At least, Duval," said he to me, when I shook hands

with him, and with all my heart forgave him, "mad, and reckless as I have been, and fatal to all whom I loved; I have never allowed the child to want, and have supported her in comfort, when I was myself almost without a meal." A bad man no doubt this was; and yet not utterly wicked: a great criminal who paid an awful penalty. Let us be humble, who have erred too; and thankful, if we have a hope that we have found mercy.

I believe it was some braggart letter, which La Motte wrote to a comrade in M. de Vaux's camp, and in which he boasted of making the conversion of a *petite Protestante* at Strasbourg, which came to the knowledge of poor M. de Saverne, hastened his return home, and brought about this dreadful end. La Motte owned as much, indeed, in the last interview I ever had with him.

Who told Madame de Saverne of her husband's death? It was not for years after that I myself (unlucky chatterbox, whose tongue was always blabbing) knew what had happened. My mother thought that she must have overheard Bidois the boatman, who told the whole story over his glass of Geneva in our parlour. The Countess's chamber was overhead, and the door left open. The poor thing used to be very angry at the notion of a locked door, and since that awful escapade to the sea-shore, my mother slept in her room, or a servant whom she liked pretty well supplied mother's place.

In her condition the dreadful event affected her but little; and we never knew that she was aware of it until one evening when it happened that a neighbour, one of our French people of Rye, was talking over the tea-table, and telling us of a dreadful thing he had seen on Penenden Heath as he was coming home. He there saw *a woman burned at the stake* for the murder of her husband. The story is in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the year 1769, and that will settle pretty well the date of the evening when our neighbour related the horrible tale to us.

Poor Madame de Saverne (who had a very grand air, and was perfectly like a lady) said quite simply, "In this case, my good Ursule, I shall be burned too. For you know I was the cause of my husband being killed. M. le Chevalier went and killed him in Corsica." And she looked round with a little smile, and nodded; and arranged her white dress with her slim hot hands.

When the poor thing spoke, the Chevalier sank back as if he had been shot himself.

"Good-night, neighbour Marion," groans mother; "she is very bad to-night. Come to bed, my dear, come to bed." And the poor thing followed mother, curtseying very finely to the company, and saying, quite softly, "Oui, oui, oui, they will burn me; they will burn me."

This idea seized upon her mind, and never left it. Madame la Comtesse passed a night of great agitation; talking incessantly. Mother and her maid were up with her all night. All night long we could hear her songs, her screams, her terrible laughter. . . . Oh, pitiful was thy lot in this world, poor guiltless, harmless lady. In thy brief years, how little happiness! For thy marriage portion only gloom, and terror, and submission, and captivity. The awful Will above us ruled it so. Poor frightened spirit! it has woke under serener skies now, and passed out of reach of our terrors, and temptations, and troubles.

At my early age I could only be expected to obey my elders and parents, and to consider all things were right which were done round about me. Mother's cuffs on the head I received without malice, and if the truth must be owned, had not seldom to submit to the *major* operation which my grandfather used to perform with a certain rod which he kept in a locked cupboard, and accompany with long wearisome sermons between each cut or two of his favourite instrument. These good people, as I gradually began to learn, bore but an indifferent reputation in the town which they inhabited, and were neither liked by the French of their own colony, nor by the English among whom we dwelt. Of course, being a simple little fellow, I honoured my father and mother as became me—my grandfather and mother, that is—father being dead some years.

Grandfather, I knew, had a share in a fishing-boat, as numbers of people had, both at Rye and Winchelsea. Stokes, our fisherman, took me out once or twice, and I liked the sport very much: but it appeared that I ought to have said nothing about the boat and the fishing—for one night when we pulled out only a short way beyond a rock which we used to call the Bull Rock, from a pair of horns which stuck out of the water, and there were hailed by my old friend Bidois, who had come from Boulogne in his lugger—and then . . . well then, I was going to explain the whole matter artlessly to one of our neighbours who happened to step in to supper,

when grandpapa (who had made a grace of five minutes long before taking the dish-cover off) fetched me a slap across the face which sent me reeling off my perch. And the Chevalier, who was supping with us, only laughed at my misfortune.

This being laughed at somehow affected me more than the blows. I was used to those, from grandfather and mother too; but when people once had been kind to me I could not bear a different behaviour from them. And this gentleman certainly was. He improved my French very much, and used to laugh at my blunders and bad pronunciation. He took a good deal of pains with me when I was at home, and made me speak French like a little gentleman.

In a very brief time he learned English himself, with a droll accent to be sure, but so as to express himself quite intelligibly. His head-quarters were at Winchelsea, though he would frequently be away at Deal, Dover, Canterbury, even London. He paid mother a pension for little Agnes, who grew apace, and was the most winning child I ever set eyes on. I remember, as well as yesterday, the black dress which was made for her after her poor mother's death, her pale cheeks, and the great solemn eyes gazing out from under the black curling ringlets which fell over her forehead and face.

Why do I make zigzag journeys? 'Tis the privilege of old age to be garrulous, and its happiness to remember early days. As I sink back in my arm-chair, safe and sheltered *post tot discrimina*, and happier than it has been the lot of most fellow-sinners to be, the past comes back to me—the stormy past, the strange unhappy yet happy past—and I look at it scared and astonished sometimes; as huntsmen look at the gaps and ditches over which they have leapt, and wonder how they are alive.

My good fortune in rescuing that little darling child caused the Chevalier to be very kind to me; and when he was with us, I used to hang on to the skirts of his coat, and prattle for hours together, quite losing all fear of him. Except my kind namesake, the captain and admiral, this was the first *gentleman* I ever met in intimacy—a gentleman with many a stain, nay crime to reproach him; but not all lost, I hope and pray. I own to having a kindly feeling towards that fatal man. I see myself a child prattling at his coat-skirts, and trotting along our roads and marshes with him. I see him with his

sad pale face—and a kind of *blighting* look he had—looking at that unconscious lady, at that little baby. My friends the Neapolitans would have called his an evil eye, and exorcised it accordingly. A favourite walk we had was to a house about a mile out of Winchelsea, where a grazing farmer lived. My delight then was to see not his cattle, but his pigeons, of which he had a good stock, of croppers, pouters, runts, and turbits; and amongst these I was told there were a sort of pigeons called carriers, which would fly for prodigious distances, returning from the place to which they were taken though it were ever so distant, to that where they lived and were bred.

Whilst I was at Mr. Perreau's, one of these pigeons actually came in flying from the sea, as it appeared to me: and Perreau looked at it, and fondled it, and said to the Chevalier, "There is nothing. It is to be at the old place." On which M. le Chevalier only said, "C'est bien;" and as we walked away told me all he knew about pigeons, which I dare say was no great knowledge.

Why did he say there was nothing? I asked in the innocence of my prattle. The Chevalier told me that these birds sometimes brought messages, written on a little paper, and tied under their wings, and that Perreau said there was nothing because there was nothing.

"Oh, then! he sometimes *does* have messages with his birds?"

The Chevalier shrugged his shoulder, and took a great pinch out of his fine snuff-box. "What did papa Duval do to you the other day when you began to talk too fast?" says he. "Learn to hold thy little tongue, Denis, mon garçon. If thou livest a little longer, and tellest all thou seest, the Lord help thee!" And I suppose our conversation ended here, and he strode home, and I trotted after him.

I narrate these things occurring in childhood by the help of one or two marks which have been left behind — as the ingenious boy found his way home by the pebbles which he dropped along his line of march. Thus I happen to know the year when poor Madame de Saverne must have been ill, by referring to the date of the execution of the woman whom our neighbour saw burned on Penenden Heath. Was it days, was it weeks after this that Madame de Saverne's illness ended as all our illnesses will end

During the whole course of her illness, whatever its length may have been, those priests from Slindon (or from Mr. Weston's the Popish gentleman's at the Priory) were constantly in our house, and I suppose created a great scandal among the Protestants of the town. M. de la Motte showed an extraordinary zeal in this business; and, sinner as he was, certainly was a most devout sinner, according to his persuasion. I do not remember, or was not cognizant, when the end came; but I remember my astonishment as, passing by her open chamber door, I saw candles lighted before her bed, and some of those clergy watching there, and the Chevalier de la Motte kneeling in the passage in an attitude of deep contrition and grief.

On that last day there was, as it appeared, a great noise and disturbance round our house. The people took offence at the perpetual coming in and out of the priest; and on the very night when the coffin was to be taken from our house, and the clergymen were performing the last services there, the windows of the room, where the poor lady lay, were broken in by a great volley of stones, and a roaring mob shouting, "No Popery, down with priests!"

Grandfather lost all courage at these threatening demonstrations, and screamed out at his *bru* for bringing all this persecution and danger upon him. "*Silence, misérable!*" says she. "Go sit in the back kitchen, and count your money-bags!" *She*, at least, did not lose her courage.

M. de la Motte, though not frightened, was much disturbed. The matter might be very serious. I did not know at the time how furiously angry our townspeople were with my parents for harbouring a Papist. Had they known that the lady was a converted Protestant, they would, doubtless, have been more violent still.

We were in a manner besieged in our house; the garrison being —the two priests in much terror; my grandfather, under the bed for what I know, or somewhere where he would be equally serviceable; my mother and the Chevalier, with their wits about them; and little Denis Duval, no doubt very much in the way. When the poor lady died it was thought advisable to send her little girl out of the way; and Mrs. Weston at the Priory took her in, who belonged, as has before been said, to the ancient faith.

We looked out with no little alarm for the time when the hearse should come to take the poor lady's body away; for the people would

not leave the street, and barricaded either end of it, having perpetrated no actual violence beyond the smashing of the windows as yet, but ready no doubt for more mischief.

Calling me to him, M. de la Motte said, "Denis, thou rememberest about the carrier pigeon the other day with nothing under his wing?" I remembered, of course.

"Thou shalt be my carrier pigeon. Thou shalt carry no letter but a message. I can trust thee now with a secret." And I kept it, and will tell it now that the people are quite out of danger from *that* piece of intelligence, as I can promise you.

"You know Mr. Weston's house?" Know the house where Agnes was—the best house in the town? Of course I did. He named eight or ten houses besides Weston's at which I was to go and say, "The mackerel are coming in. Come as many of you as can." And I went to the houses, and said the words; and when the people said, "Where?" I said, "Opposite our house," and so went on.

The last and handsomest house (I had never been in it before) was Mr. Weston's, at the Priory: and there I went and called to see him. And I remember Mrs. Weston was walking up and down a gallery over the hall with a little crying child who would not go to sleep.

"Agnes, Agnes!" says I, and that baby was quiet in a minute, smiling, and crowing and flinging out her arms. Indeed, mine was the first name she could speak.

The gentlemen came out of their parlour, where they were over their pipes, and asked me, surlily enough, "What I wanted?" I said, "The mackerel were out, and the crews were wanted before Peter Duval's, the barber's." And one of them, with a scowl on his face, and an oath, said they would be there, and shut the door in my face.

As I went away from the Priory, and crossed the churchyard by the Rectory gate, who should come up but Doctor Barnard in his gig, with lamps lighted; and I always saluted him after he had been so kind to me, and had given me the books and the cake. "What," says he, "my little shrimper! Have you fetched any fish off the rocks to-night?"

"Oh, no, sir!" says I. "I have been taking messages all round."

"And what message, my boy?"

I told him the message about the mackerel, &c.; but added that

I must not tell the names, for the Chevalier had desired me not to mention them. And then I went on to tell how there was a great crowd in the street, and that they were breaking windows at our house.

"Breaking windows? What for?" I told him what had happened. "Take Dolly to the stables. Don't say anything to your mistress, Samuel, and come along with me, my little shrimper," says the Doctor. He was a very tall man in a great white wig. I see him now skipping over the tombstones, by the great ivy tower of the church, and so through the churchyard-gate towards our house.

The hearse had arrived by this time. The crowd had increased, and there was much disturbance and agitation. As soon as the hearse came, a yell rose up from the people. "Silence, shame! Hold your tongue! Let the poor woman go in quiet," a few people said. These were the men *of the mackerel fishery;* whom the Weston gentlemen presently joined. But the fishermen were a small crowd; the townspeople were many and very angry. As we passed by the end of Port Street (where our house was) we could see the people crowding at either end of the street, and in the midst the great hearse with its black plumes before our door.

It was impossible that the hearse could pass through the crowd at either end of the street, if the people were determined to bar the way. I went in, as I had come, by the back gate of the garden, where the lane was still quite solitary, Dr. Barnard following me. We were awfully scared as we passed through the back kitchen (where the oven and boiler is) by the sight of an individual who suddenly leapt out of the copper, and who cried out, "O mercy, mercy, save me from the wicked men!" This was my grandpapa, and, with all respect for grandpapas (being of their age and standing myself now), I cannot but own that mine on this occasion cut rather a pitiful figure.

"Save my house! Save my property!" shouts my ancestor, and the Doctor turns away from him scornfully, and passes on.

In the passage out of this back kitchen we met Monsieur de la Motte, who says, "Ah, c'est toi, mon garçon. Thou hast been on thy errands. Our people are well there!" and he makes a bow to the Doctor, who came in with me, and who replied by a salutation equally stiff. M. de la Motte, reconnoitring from the upper room, had, no doubt, seen his people arrive. As I looked towards him I

remarked that he was armed. He had a belt with pistols in it, and a sword by his side.

In the back room were the two Roman Catholic clergymen, and four men who had come with the hearse. They had been fiercely assailed as they entered the house with curses, shouts, hustling, and I believe even sticks and stones. My mother was serving them with brandy when we came in. She was astonished when she saw the rector make his appearance in our house. There was no love between his reverence and our family.

He made a very grand obeisance to the Roman Catholic clergymen. "Gentlemen," said he, "as rector of this parish, and magistrate of the county, I have come to keep the peace: and if there is any danger, to share it with you. The lady will be buried in the old churchyard, I hear. Mr. Trestles, are you ready to move?"

The men said they would be prepared immediately, and went to bring down their melancholy burden. "Open the door, you!" says the Doctor. The people within shrank back. "*I* will do it," says mother.

"Et moi, parbleu!" says the Chevalier advancing, his hand on his hilt.

"I think, sir, I shall be more serviceable than you," says the Doctor, very coldly. "If these gentlemen my confrères are ready, we will go out; I will go first, as rector of this parish." And mother drew the bolts, and he walked out and took off his hat.

A Babel roar of yells, shouts, curses, came pouring into the hall as the door opened, and the Doctor remained on the steps, bareheaded and undaunted.

"How many of my parishioners are here? Stand aside all who come to my church!" he called out very bold.

At this arose immense roars of "No Popery! down with the priests! down with them! drown them!" and I know not what more words of hatred and menace.

"You men of the French church," shouted out the Doctor, "are you here?"

"We are here! Down with Popery!" roar the Frenchmen.

"Because you were persecuted a hundred years ago, you want to persecute in your turn. Is that what your Bible teaches you? Mine doesn't. When your church wanted repair, I gave you my nave where you had your service, and were welcome. Is this the way you

repay kindness which has been shown to you, you who ought to know better? For shame on you! I say for shame! Don't try and frighten *me*. Roger Hooker, I know you, you poaching vagabond; who kept your wife and children when you were at Lewes Gaol? How dare *you* be persecuting anybody, Thomas Flint? As sure as my name is Barnard, if you stop this procession, I will commit you to-morrow."

Here was a cry of "Huzzay for the Doctor! huzzay for the Rector!" which I am afraid came from the *mackerels*, who were assembled by this time, and were *not* mum, as fish generally are.

"Now, gentlemen, advance, if you please!" This he said to the two foreign clergymen, who came forward courageously enough, the Chevalier de la Motte walking behind them. "Listen, you friends and parishioners, Churchmen and Dissenters! These two foreign dissenting clergymen are going to bury, in a neighbouring churchyard, a departed sister, as you foreign dissenters have buried your own dead without harm or hindrance; and I will accompany these gentlemen to the grave prepared for the deceased lady, and I will see her laid in peace there, as surely as I hope myself to lie in peace."

Here the people shouted; but it was with admiration for the rector. There was no outcry any more. The little procession fell into an orderly rank, passed through the streets, and round the Protestant church to the old burying-ground behind the house of the Priory. The rector walked between the two Roman Catholic clergymen. I imagine the scene before me now—the tramp of the people, the flicker of a torch or two; and then we go in at the gate of the Priory ground into the old graveyard of the monastery, where a grave had been dug, on which the stone still tells that Clarissa, born de Viomesnil, and widow of Francis Stanislas Count of Saverne and Barr in Lorraine, lies buried beneath.

When the service was ended, the Chevalier de la Motte (by whose side I stood, holding by his cloak) came up to the Doctor. "Monsieur le Docteur," says he, "you have acted like a gallant man; you have prevented bloodshed——"

"I am fortunate, sir," says the Doctor.

"You have saved the lives of these two worthy ecclesiastics, and rescued from insult the remains of one——"

"Of whom I know the sad history," says the Doctor, very gravely.

"I am not rich, but will you permit me to give this purse for your poor!"

"Sir, it is my duty to accept it," replied the Doctor. The purse contained a hundred louis, as he afterwards told me.

"And may I ask to take your hand, sir?" cries the poor Chevalier, clasping his own together.

"No, sir!" said the Doctor, putting his own hands behind his back. "Your hands have that on them which the gift of a few guineas cannot wash away." The Doctor spoke very good French. "My child, good-night; and the best thing I can wish thee is to wish thee out of the hands of that man."

"Monsieur!" says the Chevalier, laying his hand on his sword mechanically.

"I think, sir, the last time it was with the pistol you showed your skill!" says Doctor Barnard, and went in at his own wicket as he spoke, leaving poor La Motte like a man who has just been struck with a blow; and then he fell to weeping and crying that the curse—the curse of Cain was upon him.

"My good boy," the old rector said to me in after days, while talking over these adventures, "thy friend the Chevalier was the most infernal scoundrel I ever set eyes on, and I never looked at his foot without expecting to see it was cloven."

"And could he tell me anything about the poor Countess?" I asked. He knew nothing. He saw her but once, he thought. "And faith," says he, with an arch look, "it so happened that I was not too intimate with your *own* worthy family."

## CHAPTER V.

### I HEAR THE SOUND OF BOW BELLS.

WHATEVER may have been the rector's dislike to my parents, in respect of us juniors and my dear little Agnes de Saverne he had no such prejudices, and both of us were great favourites with him. He considered himself to be a man entirely without prejudices; and towards Roman Catholics he certainly was most liberal. He sent his wife to see Mrs. Weston, and an acquaintance was made between the families, who had scarcely known each other before. Little Agnes was constantly with these Westons, with whom the Chevalier de la Motte also became intimate. Indeed, we have seen that he must have known them already, when he sent me on the famous "mackerel" message which brought together a score at least of townspeople. I remember Mrs. Weston as a frightened-looking woman, who seemed as if she had a ghost constantly before her. Frightened, however, or not, she was always kind to my little Agnes.

The younger of the Weston brothers (he who swore at me the night of the burial) was a red-eyed, pimple-faced, cock-fighting gentleman for ever on the trot, and known, I dare say not very favourably, all the country round. They were said to be gentlemen of good private means. They lived in a pretty genteel way, with a postchaise for the lady, and excellent nags to ride. They saw very little company; but this may have been because they were Roman Catholics, of whom there were not many in the county, except at Arundel and Slindon, where the lords and ladies were of too great quality to associate with a pair of mere fox-hunting, horse-dealing squires. M. de la Motte, who was quite the fine gentleman, as I have said, associated with these people freely enough: but then he had interests in common with them, which I began to understand when I was some ten or a dozen years old, and used to go to see my little Agnes at the Priory. She was growing apace to be a fine lady. She had dancing-masters, music-masters, language-masters (those foreign *tonsured* gentry who were always about the Priory), and was so tall that mother talked of putting powder in her hair. Ah, belle

ame! another hand hath since whitened it, though I love it ebony r silver!

I continued at Rye School, boarding with Mr. Rudge and his ram-drinking daughter, and got a pretty fair smattering of such earning as was to be had at the school. I had a fancy to go to sea, ut Doctor Barnard was strong against that wish of mine: unless ndeed I should go out of Rye and Winchelsea altogether—get into King's ship, and perhaps on the quarter-deck, under the patronage f my friend Sir Peter Denis, who ever continued to be kind to me.

Every Saturday night I trudged home from Rye, as gay as school-oy could be. After Madame de Saverne's death the Chevalier de a Motte took our lodgings on the first floor. He was of an active lisposition, and found business in plenty to occupy him. He would e absent from his lodgings for weeks and months. He made ourneys on horseback into the interior of the country; went to London often; and sometimes abroad with our fishermen's boats. As I have said, he learned our language well, and taught me his. Mother's German was better than her French, and my book for eading the German was Doctor Luther's Bible; indeed, that very olume in which poor M. de Saverne wrote down his prayer for the hild whom he was to see only twice in this world.

Though Agnes's little chamber was always ready at our house, where she was treated like a little lady, having a servant specially ttached to her, and all the world to spoil her, she passed a great leal of time with Mrs. Weston, of the Priory, who took a great ffection for the child even before she lost her own daughter. I have aid that good masters were here found for her. She learned to peak English as a native, of course, and French and music from the athers who always were about the house. Whatever the child's expenses or wants were, M. de la Motte generously defrayed them. After his journeys he would bring her back toys, sweetmeats, knick-nacks fit for a little duchess. She lorded it over great and small in he Priory, in the *Perruquery*, as we may call my mother's house, ay, nd in the Rectory too, where Dr. and Mrs. Barnard were her very umble servants, like all the rest of us.

And here I may as well tell you that I was made to become a member of the Church of England, because mother took huff at our French Protestants, who would continue persecuting her for harbour-

ing the Papists, and insisted that between the late poor Countess and the Chevalier there had been an unlawful intimacy. M. Borel, our pastor, preached at poor mother several times, she said. I did not understand his inuendoes, being a simple child, I fear not caring much for sermons in those days. For grandpapa's I know I did not; he used to give us half an hour at morning, and half an hour at evening. I could not help thinking of grandfather skipping out of the copper, and calling on us to spare his life on the day of the funeral; and his preaching went in at one ear and out at t'other. One day—àpropos of some pomatum which a customer wanted to buy, and which I know mother made with lard and bergamot herself—I heard him tell such a fib to a customer, that somehow I never could respect the old man afterwards. He actually said the pomatum had just come to him from France direct—from the Dauphin's own hair-dresser: and our neighbour, I dare say, would have bought it, but I said, "Oh, grandpapa, you must mean some other pomatum! I saw mother make this with her own hands." Grandfather actually began to cry when I said this. He said I was being his death. He asked that somebody should fetch him out and hang him that moment. Why is there no bear, says he, to eat that little monster's head off and destroy that prodigy of crime? Nay, I used to think I *was* a monster sometimes: he would go on so fiercely about my wickedness and perverseness.

Doctor Barnard was passing by our pole one day, and our open door, when grandfather was preaching upon this sin of mine, with a strap in one hand, laying over my shoulders in the intervals of the discourse. Down goes the strap in a minute, as the Doctor's lean figure makes its appearance at the door; and grandfather begins to smirk and bow, and hope his reverence was well. My heart was full. I had had sermon in the morning, and sermon at night, and strapping every day that week; and heaven help me, I loathed that old man, and loathe him still.

"How can I, sir," says I, bursting out into a passion of tears—"How can I honour my grandfather and mother if grandfather tells such d—— lies as he does?" And I stamped with my feet, trembling with wrath and indignation at the disgrace put upon me. I then burst out with my story, which there was no controverting; and I will say grandfather looked at me as if he would kill me; and I ended my tale sobbing at the Doctor's knees.

"Listen, Mr. Duval," says Dr. Barnard, very sternly: "I know a great deal more than you think about you and your doings. My advice to you is to treat this child well, and to leave off some practices which will get you into trouble, as sure as your name is what it is. I know where your pigeons go to, and where they come from. And some day, when I have you in my justice-room, we shall see whether I will show you any more mercy than you have shown to this child. I know you to be . . . ." and the Doctor whispered something into grandfather's ears and stalked away

Can you guess by what name the Doctor called my grandfather? If he called him hypocrite, *ma foi*, he was not far wrong. But the truth is, he called him smuggler, and that was a name which fitted hundreds of people along our coast, I promise you. At Hythe, at Folkestone, at Dover, Deal, Sandwich, there were scores and scores of these gentry. All the way to London they had depôts, friends, and correspondents. Inland and along the Thames there were battles endless between them and the revenue people. Our friends "the mackerel," who came out at Monsieur de la Motte's summons, of course were of this calling. One day when he came home from one of his expeditions, I remember jumping forward to welcome him, for he was at one time very kind to me, and as I ran into his arms he started back, and shrieked out an oath and a *sacré-bleu* or two. He was wounded in the arm. There had been a regular battle at Deal between the dragoons and revenue officers on the one side, and the smugglers and their friends. Cavalry had charged cavalry, and Monsieur de la Motte (his smuggling name, he told me afterwards, was Mr. Paul, or Pole) had fought on the *mackerel* side.

So were my gentlemen at the Priory of the Mackerel party. Why, I could name you great names of merchants and bankers at Canterbury, Dover, Rochester, who were engaged in this traffic. My grandfather, you see, howled with the wolves; but then he used to wear a snug *lamb's-skin* over his wolf's hide. Ah, shall I thank Heaven like the Pharisee, that I am not as those men are? I hope there is no harm in being thankful that I have been brought out of temptation; that I was not made a rogue at a child's age; and that I did not come to the gallows as a man. Such a fate has befallen more than one of the precious friends of my youth, as I shall have to relate in due season.

That habit I had of speaking out everything that was on my

mind brought me, as a child, into innumerable scrapes, but I do thankfully believe has preserved me from still greater. What could you do with a little chatterbox, who, when his grandfather offered to sell a pot of pomatum as your true Pommade de Cythère, must cry out, "No, grandpapa, mother made it with marrow and bergamot?" If anything happened which I was not to mention, I was sure to blunder out some account of it. Good Doctor Barnard, and my patron Captain Denis (who was a great friend of our rector), I suppose used to joke about this propensity of mine, and would laugh for ten minutes together, as I told my stories; and I think the Doctor had a serious conversation with my mother on the matter; for she said, "He has reason. The boy shall not go any more. We will try and have *one* honest man in the family."

Go any more *where?* Now I will tell you (and I am much more ashamed of this than of the barber's pole, Monsieur mon fils, that I can promise you). When I was boarding at the grocer's at Rye, I and other boys were constantly down at the water, and we learned to manage a boat pretty early. Rudge did not go out himself, being rheumatic and lazy, but his apprentice would be absent frequently all night; and on more than one occasion I went out as odd boy in the boat to put my hand to anything.

Those pigeons I spoke of anon came from Boulogne. When one arrived he brought a signal that our Boulogne correspondent was on his way, and we might be on the look-out. The French boat would make for a point agreed upon, and we lie off until she came. We took cargo from her: barrels without number, I remember. Once we saw her chased away by a revenue-cutter. Once the same ship fired at us. I did not know what the balls were, which splashed close alongside of us; but I remember the apprentice of Rudge's (he used to make love to Miss R., and married her afterwards,) singing out, "Lord, have mercy," in an awful consternation, and the Chevalier crying out, "Hold your tongue, misérable! You were never born to be drowned or shot." He had some hesitation about taking me out on this expedition. He was engaged in running smuggled goods, that is the fact; and "smuggler" was the word which Doctor Barnard whispered in my grandfather's ear. If we were hard pressed at certain points which we knew, and could ascertain by cross-bearings which we took, we would sink our kegs till a more convenient time, and then return and drag for them, and bring them up with line and grapnel.

I certainly behaved much better when we were fired at, than that oaf of a Bevil, who lay howling his "Lord, have mercy upon us," at the bottom of the boat; but somehow the Chevalier discouraged my juvenile efforts in the smuggling line, from his fear of that unlucky tongue of mine, which would blab everything I knew. I may have been out *a-fishing* half-a-dozen times in all; but especially after we had been fired at, La Motte was for leaving me at home. My mother was averse, too, to my becoming a seaman (a smuggler) by profession. Her aim was to make a gentleman of me, she said, and I am most unfeignedly thankful to her for keeping me out of mischief's way. Had I been permitted to herd along with the black sheep, Doctor Barnard would never have been so kind to me as he was; and indeed that good man showed me the greatest favour. When I came home from school he would often have me to the Rectory, and hear me my lessons, and he was pleased to say I was a lively boy of good parts.

The Doctor received rents for his college at Oxford, which has considerable property in these parts, and twice a year would go to London and pay the moneys over. In my boyish times these journeys to London were by no means without danger; and if you will take a *Gentleman's Magazine* from the shelf you will find a highway robbery or two in every month's chronicle. We boys at school were never tired of talking of highwaymen and their feats. As I often had to walk over to Rye from home of a night (so as to be in time for early morning school), I must needs buy a little brass-barrelled pistol, with which I practised in secret, and which I had to hide, lest mother or Rudge, or the schoolmaster, should take it away from me. Once as I was talking with a schoolfellow, and vapouring about what we would do, were we attacked, I fired my pistol and shot away a piece of his coat. I might have hit his stomach, not his coat—heaven be good to us!—and this accident made me more careful in the use of my artillery. And now I used to practise with small shot instead of bullets, and pop at sparrows whenever I could get a chance.

At Michaelmas, in the year 1776 (I promise you I remember the year), my dear and kind friend, Doctor Barnard, having to go to London with his rents, proposed to take me to London to see my other patron, Sir Peter Denis, between whom and the Doctor there was a great friendship; and it is to those dear friends that I owe the

great good fortune which has befallen me in life. Indeed, when I think of what I might have been, and of what I have escaped, my heart is full of thankfulness for the great mercies which have fallen to my share. Well, at this happy and eventful Michaelmas of 1776, Doctor Barnard says to me, "Denis, my child, if thy mother will grant leave, I have a mind to take thee to see thy godfather, Sir Peter Denis, in London. I am going up with my rents, my neighbour Weston will share the horses with me, and thou shalt see the Tower and Mrs. Salmon's wax-work before thou art a week older."

You may suppose that this proposition made Master Denis Duval jump for joy. Of course I had heard of London all my life, and talked with people who had been there, but that I should go myself to Admiral Sir Peter Denis's house, and see the play, St. Paul's, and Mrs. Salmon's, here was a height of bliss I never had hoped to attain. I could not sleep for thinking of my pleasure; I had some money, and I promised to buy as many toys for Agnes as the Chevalier used to bring her. My mother said I should go like a gentleman, and turned me out in a red waistcoat with plate buttons, a cock to my hat, and ruffles to my shirts. How I counted the hours of the night before our departure! I was up before the dawn, packing my little valise. I got my little brass-barrelled pocket-pistol, and I loaded it with shot. I put it away into my breast-pocket; and if we met with a highwayman I promised myself he should have my charge of lead in his face. The Doctor's postchaise was at his stables not very far from us. The stable lanterns were alight, and Brown, the Doctor's man, cleaning the carriage, when Mr. Denis Duval comes up to the stable door, lugging his portmanteau after him through the twilight. Was ever daylight so long a-coming? Ah! There come the horses at last; the horses from the "King's Head," and old Pascoe, the one-eyed postilion. How well I remember the sound of their hoofs in that silent street! I can tell everything that happened on that day; what we had for dinner—viz., veal cutlets and French beans, at Maidstone; where we changed horses, and the colour of the horses. "Here, Brown! Here's my portmanteau! I say, where shall I stow it?" My portmanteau was about as large as a good-sized apple-pie. I jump into the carriage and we drive up to the Rectory: and I think the Doctor will never come out. There he is at last: with his mouth full of buttered toast, and I bob my head to him a hundred times out of the chaise window. Then I must jump out, forsooth.

"Brown, shall I give you a hand with the luggage?" says I, and I dare say they all laugh. Well, I am so happy that anybody may laugh who likes. The Doctor comes out, his precious box under his arm. I see dear Mrs. Barnard's great cap nodding at us out of the parlour window as we drive away from the Rectory door to stop a hundred yards farther on at the Priory.

There at the parlour window stands my dear little Agnes, in a white frock, in a great cap with a blue riband and bow, and curls clustering over her face. I wish Sir Joshua Reynolds had painted thee in those days, my dear: but thou wert the very image of one of his little ladies, that one who became Duchess of Buccleuch afterwards. There is my Agnes, and now presently comes out Mr. Weston's man and luggage, and it is fixed on the roof. Him, his master, Mr. George Weston, follows. This was the most good-natured of the two, and I shall never forget my sensation of delight, when I saw him bring out two holster-pistols, which he placed each in a pocket of the chaise. Is Tommy Chapman, the apothecary's son of Westgate, alive yet, and does he remember my wagging my head to him as our chaise whirled by? He was shaking a mat at the door of his father's shop as my lordship accompanied by my noble friends passed by.

First stage, Ham Street, "The Bear." A grey horse and a bay to change, *I* remember them. Second stage, Ashford. Third stage . . . . I think I am asleep about the third stage: and no wonder, a poor little wretch who had been awake half the night before, and no doubt many nights previous, thinking of this wonderful journey. Fourth stage, Maidstone, "The Bell." "And here we will stop to dinner, Master Shrimpcatcher," says the Doctor, and I jump down out of the carriage nothing loth. The Doctor followed with his box, of which he never lost sight.

The Doctor liked his ease in his inn, and took his sip of punch so comfortably, that I, for my part, thought he never would be gone. I was out in the stables and looking at the horses, and talking to the ostler who was rubbing his nags down. I dare say I had a peep into the kitchen, and at the pigeons in the inn yard, and at all things which were to be seen at "The Bell," while my two companions were still at their interminable punch. It was an old-fashioned inn, with a gallery round the court-yard. Heaven bless us! Falstaff and Bardolph may have stopped there on the road to Gadshill. I was in

the stable looking at the nags, when Mr. Weston comes out of the inn, looks round the court, opens the door of the postchaise, takes out his pistols, looks at the priming, and puts them back again. Then we are off again, and time enough too. It seemed to me many hours since we had arrived at that creaking old "Bell." And away we go through Addington, Eynesford, by miles and miles of hop-gardens. I dare say I did not look at the prospect much, beautiful though it might be, my young eyes being for ever on the look-out for St. Paul's and London.

For a great part of the way Doctor Barnard and his companion had a fine controversy about their respective religions, for which each was alike zealous. Nay: it may be the rector invited Mr. Weston to take a place in his postchaise in order to have this battle, for he never tired of arguing the question between the two churches. Towards the close of the day Master Denis Duval fell asleep on Dr. Barnard's shoulder, and the good-natured clergyman did not disturb him.

I woke up with the sudden stoppage of the carriage. The evening was falling. We were upon a lonely common, and a man on horseback was at the window of the postchaise.

"Give us out that there box! and your money!" I heard him say in a very gruff voice. O heavens! we were actually stopped by a highwayman! It was delightful.

Mr. Weston jumped at his pistols very quick. "Here's our money, you scoundrel!" says he, and he fired point-blank at the rogue's head. Confusion! The pistol missed fire. He aimed the second, and again no report followed!

"Some scoundrel has been tampering with these," says Mr. Weston, aghast.

"Come," says Captain Macheath, "come, your——"

But the next word the fellow spoke was a frightful oath; for I took out my little pistol, which was full of shot, and fired it into his face. The man reeled, and I thought would have fallen out of his saddle. The postilion, frightened no doubt, clapped spurs to his horse, and began to gallop. "Shan't we stop and take that rascal, sir?" said I to the Doctor. On which Mr. Weston gave a peevish kind of push at me, and said, "No, no. It is getting quite dark. Let us push on." And, indeed, the highwayman's horse had taken fright, and we could see him galloping away across the common.

I was so elated to think that I, a little boy, had shot a live highwayman, that I daresay I bragged outrageously of my action. We set down Mr. Weston at his inn in the Borough, and crossed London Bridge, and there I was in London at last. Yes, and that was the Monument, and then we came to the Exchange, and yonder, yonder was St. Paul's. We went up Holborn, and so to Ormond Street, where my patron lived in a noble mansion ; and where his wife, my Lady Denis, received me with a great deal of kindness. You may be sure the battle with the highwayman was fought over again, and I got due credit from myself and others for my gallantry.

Sir Peter and his lady introduced me to a number of their acquaintances as the little boy who shot the highwayman. They received a great deal of company, and I was frequently had in to their dessert. I suppose I must own that my home was below in the housekeeper's room with Mrs. Jellicoe ; but my lady took such a fancy to me that she continually had me upstairs, took me out driving in her chariot, or ordered one of the footmen to take me to the sights of the town, and sent me in his charge to the play. It was the last year Garrick performed ; and I saw him in the play of Macbeth, in a gold-laced blue coat, with scarlet plush waistcoat and breeches. Ormond Street, Bloomsbury, was on the outskirts of the town then, with open country behind, stretching as far as Hampstead. Bedford House, north of Bloomsbury Square, with splendid gardens, was close by, and Montague House, where I saw stuffed camelopards, and all sorts of queer things from foreign countries. Then there were the Tower, and the Wax-work, and Westminster Abbey, and Vauxhall. What a glorious week of pleasure it was ! At the week's end the kind Doctor went home again, and all those dear kind people gave me presents, and cakes, and money, and spoilt the little boy who shot the highwayman.

The affair was actually put into the newspapers, and who should come to hear of it but my gracious Sovereign himself. One day, Sir Peter Denis took me to see Kew Gardens and the new Chinese pagoda her Majesty had put up. Whilst walking here, and surveying this pretty place, I had the good fortune to see his M-j-sty, walking with our most gracious Qu—n, the Pr-nce of W—s, *the Bishop of Osnaburg*, my namesake, and, I think, two, or it may be three, of the Princesses. Her M-j-sty knew Sir Peter from having sailed with him, saluted him very graciously, and engaged him in conversation. And

the Best of Monarchs, looking towards his humblest subject and servant, said, "What, what? Little boy shot the highwayman. Shot him in the face. Shot him in the face!" On which the youthful Pr-nces graciously looked towards me, and the King asking Sir Peter what my profession was to be, the admiral said I hoped to be a sailor and serve his Majesty.

I promise you I was a mighty grand personage when I went home; and both at Rye and Winchelsea scores of people asked me what the King said. On our return, we heard of an accident which had happened to Mr. Joseph Weston, which ended most unhappily for that gentleman. On the very day when we set out for London he went out shooting—a sport of which he was very fond; but in climbing a hedge, and dragging his gun incautiously after him, the lock caught in a twig, and the piece discharged itself into the poor gentleman's face, lodging a number of shot into his left cheek, and into his eye, of which he lost the sight, after suffering much pain and torture.

"Bless my soul! A charge of small shot in his face! What an extraordinary thing!" cries Dr. Barnard, who came down to see mother and grandfather the day after our return home. Mrs. Barnard had told him of the accident at supper on the night previous. Had he been shot or shot some one himself, the Doctor could scarce have looked more scared. He put me in mind of Mr. Garrick, whom I had just seen at the playhouse, London, when he comes out after murdering the King.

"You look, Docteur, as if you done it yourself," says M. de la Motte, laughing, and in his English jargon. "Two time, three time, I say, Weston, you shoot youself, you carry you gun that way, and he say he not born to be shot, and he swear!"

"But, my good Chevalier, Doctor Blades picked some bits of crape out of his eye, and thirteen or fourteen shot. What is the size of your shot, Denny, with which you fired at the highwayman?"

"*Quid autem vides festucam in oculo fratris tui*, Doctor?" says the Chevalier; "that is good doctrine—Protestant or Popish, eh?" On which the Doctor held down his head, and said, "Chevalier, I am corrected; I was wrong—very wrong."

"And as for crape," La Motte resumed, "Weston is in mourning. He go to funeral at Canterbury four days ago. Yes, he tell me so. He and my friend Lütterloh go." This Mr. Lütterloh was a German living near Canterbury, with whom M. de la Motte had dealings. He

had dealings with all sorts of people; and very queer dealings, too, as I began to understand now that I was a stout boy approaching fourteen years of age, and standing pretty tall in my shoes.

De la Motte laughed then at the Doctor's suspicions. "Parsons and women all the same, save your respect, ma bonne Madame Duval, all tell tales; all believe evil of their neighbours. I tell you I see Weston shoot twenty, thirty time. Always drag his gun through hedge."

"But the crape——?"

"Bah! Always in mourning, Weston is! For shame of your *cancans*, little Denis! Never think such thing again. Don't make Weston your enemy. If a man say that of me, I would shoot him myself, parbleu!"

"But if he has done it?"

"Parbleu! I would shoot him so much ze mor!" says the Chevalier, with a stamp of his foot. And the first time he saw me alone he reverted to the subject. "Listen, Denisot!" says he: "thou becomest a great boy. Take my counsel, and hold thy tongue. This suspicion against Mr. Joseph is a monstrous crime, as well as a folly. A man say that of me—right or wrong—I burn him the brain. Once I come home, and you run against me, and I cry out, and swear and pest. I was wounded myself, I deny it not."

"And I said nothing, sir," I interposed.

"No, I do thee justice: thou didst say nothing. You know the métier we make sometimes? That night in the boat" ("*zat* night in *ze* boat," he used to say), "when the revenue cutter fire, and your poor camarade howl—ah, how he howl—you don't suppose we were there to look for lobstarepot, eh? Tu n'as pas bronché, toi. You did not crane; you show yourself a man of heart. And now, petit, apprends à te taire!" And he gave me a shake of the hand, and a couple of guineas in it too, and went off to his stables on his business. He had two or three horses now, and was always on the trot; he was very liberal with his money, and used to have handsome entertainments in his upstairs room, and never quarrelled about the bills which mother sent in. "Hold thy tongue, Denisot," said he. "Never tell who comes in or who goes out. And mind thee, child, if thy tongue wags, little birds come whisper me, and say, 'He tell.'"

I tried to obey his advice, and to rein in that truant tongue of mine. When Dr. and Mrs. Barnard themselves asked me questions

I was mum, and perhaps rather disappointed the good lady and the rector too by my reticence. For instance, Mrs. Barnard would say, "That was a nice goose I saw going from market to your house, Denny."

"Goose is very nice, ma'am," says I.

"The Chevalier often has dinners?"

"Dines every day, regular, ma'am."

"Sees the Westons a great deal?"

"Yes, ma'am," I say, with an indescribable heart-pang. And the cause of that pang I may as well tell. You see, though I was only thirteen years old, and Agnes but eight, I loved that little maid with all my soul and strength. Boy or man I never loved any other woman. I write these very words by my study fire in Fareport with madam opposite dozing over her novel till the neighbours shall come in to tea and their rubber. When my ink is run out, and my little tale is written, and yonder church that is ringing to seven o'clock prayer shall toll for a certain D. D., you will please, good neighbours, to remember that I never loved any but yonder lady, and keep a place by Darby for Joan, when her turn shall arrive.

Now in the last year or two, since she had been adopted at the Priory, Agnes came less and less often to see us. She did not go to church with us, being a Catholic. She learned from the good fathers her tutors. She learned music and French and dancing to perfection. All the county could not show a finer little lady. When she came to our shop, it was indeed a little countess honouring us with a visit. Mother was gentle before her—grandfather obsequious—I, of course, her most humble little servant. Wednesday (a half-holiday), and half Saturday, and all Sunday I might come home from school, and how I used to trudge, and how I longed to see that little maiden, any gentleman may imagine who has lost his heart to an Agnes of his own.

The first day of my arrival at home, after the memorable London journey, I presented myself at the Priory, with my pocket full of presents for Agnes. The footman let me into the hall civilly enough: but the young lady was out with Mrs. Weston in the postchaise. I might leave my message.

I wanted to *give* my message. Somehow, in that fortnight's absence from home, I had so got to long after Agnes that I never had my little sweetheart quite out of my mind. It may have been a silly thing, but I got a little pocket-book, and wrote in French a journal of

all I saw in London. I dare say there were some pretty faults in grammar. I remember a fine paragraph about my meeting the royal personages at Kew, and all their names written down in order; and this little pocket-book I must needs send to Mademoiselle de Saverne.

The next day I called again. Still Mademoiselle de Saverne was not to be seen: but in the evening a servant brought a little note from her, in which she thanked her dear brother for his beautiful book. That was some consolation. She liked the pocket-book, anyhow. I wonder, can you young people guess what I did to it before I sent it away? Yes, I did. "One, tree, feefty time," as the Chevalier would say. The next morning, quite early, I had to go back to school, having promised the Doctor to work hard after my holiday; and work I did with a will, at my French and my English, and my Navigation. I thought Saturday would never come: but it did at last, and I trotted as quick as legs would carry me from school to Winchelsea. My legs were growing apace now; and especially as they took me homewards, few could outrun them.

All good women are match-makers at heart. My dear Mrs. Barnard saw quite soon what my condition of mind was, and was touched by my boyish fervour. I called once, twice, thrice, at the Priory, and never could get a sight of Miss Agnes. The servant used to shrug his shoulders and laugh at me in an insolent way, and the last time said—"You need not call any more. We don't want our hair cut here, nor no pomatum, nor no soap, do you understand that?" and he slammed the door in my face. I was stunned by this insolence, and beside myself with rage and mortification. I went to Mrs. Barnard, and told her what had happened to me. I burst into tears of passion and grief as I flung myself on a sofa by the good ladies. I told her how I had rescued little Agnes, how I loved the little thing better than all the world. I spoke my heart out, and eased it somewhat, for the good lady wiped her eyes more than once, and finished by giving me a kiss. She did more; she invited me to tea with her on the next Wednesday when I came home from school, and who should be there but little Agnes. She blushed very much. Then she came towards me. Then she held up her little cheek to be kissed, and then she cried—oh, how she did cry! There were three people whimpering in that room. (How well I recollect it opening into the garden, and the little old blue dragon teacups and silver pot!) There were three persons, I say, crying: a lady of fifty, a boy

of thirteen, and a little girl of seven years of age. Can you guess what happened next? Of course the lady of fifty remembered that she had forgotten her spectacles, and went upstairs to fetch them; and then the little maiden began to open her heart to me, and told her dear Denny how she had been longing to see him, and how they were very angry with him at the Priory; so angry that his name was never to be spoken. "The Chevalier said that, and so did the gentlemen—especially Mr. Joseph, who had been dreadful since his accident, and one day (says my dear) when you called, he was behind the door with a great horse-whip, and said he would let you in, and flog your soul out of your body, only Mrs. Weston cried, and Mr. George said, 'Don't be a fool, Joe.' But something you have done to Mr. Joseph, dear Denny, and when your name is mentioned, he rages and swears so that it is dreadful to hear him. What can make the gentleman so angry with you?"

"So he actually was waiting with a horse-whip, was he? In that case I know what I would do. I would never go about without my pistol. I have hit one fellow," said I, "and if any other man threatens me I will defend myself."

My dear Agnes said that they were very kind to her at the Priory, although she could not bear Mr. Joseph—that they gave her good masters, that she was to go to a good school kept by a Catholic lady at Arundel. And oh, how she wished her Denny would turn Catholic, and she prayed for him always, always! And for that matter I know some one who never night or morning on his knees has forgotten that little maiden. The father used to come and give her lessons three or four times in the week, and she used to learn her lessons by heart, walking up and down in the great green walk in the kitchen-garden every morning at eleven o'clock. I knew the kitchen-garden! the wall was in North Lane, one of the old walls of the convent: at the end of the green walk there was a pear-tree. And that was where she always went to learn her lessons.

And here, I suppose, Mrs. Barnard returned to the room, having found her spectacles. And as I take mine off my nose and shut my eyes, that well-remembered scene of boyhood passes before them—that garden basking in the autumn evening—that little maiden with peachy cheeks, and glistening curls, that dear and kind old lady, who says, "'Tis time now, children, you should go home."

I had to go to school that night; but before I went I ran up

North Lane and saw the old wall and the pear-tree behind it. And do you know I thought I would try and get up the wall, and easy enough it was to find a footing between those crumbling old stones; and when on the top I could look down from the branches of the tree into the garden below, and see the house at the farther end. So that was the broad walk where Agnes learned her lessons? Master Denis Duval pretty soon had that lesson by heart.

Yes: but one day in the Christmas holidays, when there was a bitter frost, and the stones and the wall were so slippery that Mr. D. D. tore his fingers and his small-clothes in climbing to his point of observation, it happened that little Agnes was *not* sitting under the tree learning her lessons, and none but an idiot would have supposed that she would have come out on such a day.

But who should be in the garden, pacing up and down the walk all white with hoar-frost, but Joseph Weston with his patch over his eye. Unluckily he had one eye left with which he saw me; and the next moment I heard the *report* of a tremendous oath, and then a brickbat came whizzing at my head, so close that, had it struck me, it would have knocked out my eye, and my brains too.

I was down the wall in a moment: it was slippery enough; and two or three more brickbats came *à mon adresse*, but luckily failed to hit their mark.

## CHAPTER VI.

### I ESCAPE FROM A GREAT DANGER.

I SPOKE of the affair of the brickbats, at home, to Monsieur de la Motte only, not caring to tell mother, lest she should be inclined to resume her box-on-the-ear practice, for which I thought I was growing too old. Indeed, I had become a great boy. There were not half-a-dozen out of the sixty at Pocock's who could beat me when I was thirteen years old, and from these champions, were they ever so big, I never would submit to a thrashing, without a fight on my part, in which, though I might get the worst, I was pretty sure to leave some ugly marks on my adversary's nose and eyes. I remember one lad especially, Tom Parrot by name, who was three years older than myself, and whom I could no more beat than a frigate can beat a seventy-four; but we *engaged* nevertheless, and, after we had had some rounds together, Tom put one hand in his pocket, and, with a queer face and a great black eye I had given him, says—"Well, Denny, I could do it—you know I could: but I'm so lazy, I don't care about going on." And one of the bottle-holders beginning to jeer, Tom fetches him such a rap on the ear, that I promise you he showed no inclination for laughing afterwards. By the way, that knowledge of the noble art of fisticuffs which I learned at school, I had to practise at sea presently, in the cockpit of more than one of his Majesty's ships of war.

In respect of the slapping and caning at home, I think M. de la Motte remonstrated with my mother, and represented to her that I was now too old for that kind of treatment. Indeed, when I was fourteen, I was as tall as grandfather, and in a tussle I am sure I could have tripped his old heels up easily enough, and got the better of him in five minutes. Do I speak of him with undue familiarity? I pretend no love for him; I never could have any respect. Some of his practices which I knew of made me turn from him, and his loud professions only increased my distrust. *Monsieur mon fils*, if ever you marry, and have a son, I hope the little chap will have an

honest man for a grandfather, and that you will be able to say, "I loved him," when the daisies cover me.

La Motte, then, caused "the abolition of torture" in our house, and I was grateful to him. I had the queerest feelings towards that man. He was a perfect fine gentleman when he so wished: of his money most liberal, witty (in a dry, *cruel* sort of way)—most tenderly attached to Agnes. *Eh bien!* As I looked at his yellow, handsome face, cold shudders would come over me, though at this time I did not know that Agnes's father had fallen by his fatal hand.

When I informed him of Mr. Joe Weston's salute of brickbats, he looked very grave. And I told him then, too, a thing which had struck me most forcibly—viz. that the shout which Weston gave, and the oath which he uttered when he saw me on the wall, were precisely like the oath and execration uttered by *the man with the craped face*, at whom I fired from the postchaise.

"Bah, bêtise!" says La Motte. "What didst thou on the wall? One does not steal pears at thy age."

I dare say I turned red. "I heard somebody's voice," I said. "In fact, I heard Agnes singing in the garden, and—and I got on the wall to see her."

"What, you—you, a little barber's boy, climb a wall to speak to Mademoiselle Agnes de Saverne, of one of the most noble houses of Lorraine?" La Motte yelled, with a savage laugh. "Parbleu! Monsieur Weston has well done!"

"Sir!" said I, in a towering rage, "barber as I am, my fathers were honourable Protestant clergymen in Alsace, and we are as good as highwaymen at any rate! Barber, indeed!" I say again. "And now I am ready to *swear* that the man who swore at me, and the man I shot on the road, are one and the same; and I'll go to Dr. Barnard's, and swear it before him!"

The Chevalier looked aghast, and threatening for awhile. "Tu me menaces, je crois, petit manant!" says he, grinding his teeth. "This is too strong. Listen, Denis Duval! Hold thy tongue, or evil will come to thee. Thou wilt make for thyself enemies the most unscrupulous, and the most terrible—do you hear? I have placed Mademoiselle Agnes de Saverne with that admirable woman, Mistriss Weston, because she can meet at the Priory with society more fitting her noble birth than that which she will find under your grandfather's pole—parbleu. Ah, you dare mount on wall to look for Made-

moiselle de Saverne? Gare aux manstraps, mon garçon! Vive Dieu, if I see thee on that wall, I will fire on thee, moi le premier! *You* pretend to Mademoiselle Agnes. Ha! ha! ha!" And he grinned and looked like that *cloven*-footed gentleman of whom Dr. Barnard talked.

I felt that henceforward there was war between La Motte and me. At this time I had suddenly shot up to be a young man, and was not the obedient, prattling child of last year. I told grandfather that I would bear no more punishment, such as the old man had been accustomed to bestow upon me; and once when my mother lifted her hand, I struck it up, and griped it so tight that I frightened her. From that very day she never raised a hand to me. Nay, I think she was not ill-pleased, and soon actually began to spoil me. Nothing was too good for me. I know where the silk came from which made my fine new waistcoat, and the cambric for my ruffled shirts, but very much doubt whether they ever paid any duty. As I walked to church, I dare say I cocked my hat, and strutted very consequentially. When Tom Billis, the baker's boy, jeered at my fine clothes, "Tom," says I, "I will take my coat and waistcoat off for half an hour on Monday, and give thee a beating if thou hast a mind; but to-day let us be at peace, and go to church."

On the matter of church I am not going to make any boast. That awful subject lies between a man and his conscience. I have known men of lax faith pure and just in their lives, as I have met very loud-professing Christians loose in their morality, and hard and unjust in their dealings. There was a little old man at home—heaven help him!—who was of this sort, and who, when I came to know his life, would put me into such a rage of revolt whilst preaching his daily and nightly sermons, that it is a wonder I was not enlisted among the scoffers and evil-doers altogether. I have known many a young man fall away, and become utterly reprobate, because the bond of discipline was tied too tightly upon him, and because he has found the preacher who was perpetually prating over him lax in his own conduct. I am thankful, then, that I had a better instructor than my old grandfather with his strap and his cane; and was brought (I hope and trust) to a right state of thinking by a man whose brain was wise, as his life was excellently benevolent and pure. This was my good friend Dr. Barnard, and to this day I remember the conversations I had with him, and am quite sure they influenced my future life. Had I

been altogether reckless and as lawless as many people of our acquaintance and neighbourhood, he would have ceased to feel any interest in me; and instead of wearing his Majesty's epaulets (which I trust I have not disgraced), I might have been swabbing a smuggler's boat, or riding in a night caravan, with kegs beside me and pistols and cutlasses to defend me, as that unlucky La Motte owned for his part that he had done. My good mother, though she gave up the practice of smuggling, never could see the harm in it; but looked on it as a game where you played your stake, and lost or won it. She ceased to play, not because it was wrong, but it was expedient no more; and Mr. Denis, her son, was the cause of her giving up this old trade.

For me, I thankfully own that I was taught to see the matter in a graver light, not only by our Doctor's sermons (two or three of which, on the text of "Render unto Cæsar," he preached, to the rage of a great number of his congregation), but by many talks which he had with me; when he showed me that I was in the wrong to break the laws of my country to which I owed obedience, as did every good citizen. He knew (though he never told me, and his reticence in this matter was surely very kind) that my poor father had died of wounds received in a smuggling encounter; but he showed me how such a life must be loose, lawless, secret, and wicked; must bring a man amongst desperate companions, and compel him to resist Cæsar's lawful authority by rebellion, and possibly murder. "To thy mother I have used other arguments, Denny, my boy," he said, very kindly. "I and the Admiral want to make a gentleman of thee. Thy old grandfather is rich enough to help us if he chooses. I won't stop to inquire too strictly where all his money came from;* but 'tis clear we cannot make a gentleman of a smuggler's boy, who may be transported any day, or, in case of armed resistance, may be——" And here my good Doctor puts his hand to his ear, and indicates the punishment for piracy which was very common in my young time. "My Denny does not want to ride with a crape over his face, and fire pistols at revenue officers! No! I pray you will ever show an honest countenance to the world. You will render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and—the rest, my child, you know."

Now, I remarked about this man, that when he approached *a certain subject*, an involuntary awe came over him, and he hushed as

* Eheu! where a part of it *went to*, I shall have to say presently.—D. D.

it were at the very idea of that sacred theme. It was very different with poor grandfather prating his sermons (and with some other pastors I have heard), who used this Name as familiarly as any other, and . . . . but who am I to judge? and, my poor old grandfather, is there any need at this distance of time that I should be picking out the *trabem in oculo tuo?* . . . . Howbeit, on that night, as I was walking home after drinking tea with my dear Doctor, I made a vow that I would strive henceforth to lead an honest life; that my tongue should speak the truth, and my hand should be sullied by no secret crime. And as I spoke I saw my dearest little maiden's light glimmering in her chamber, and the stars shining overhead, and felt—who could feel more bold and happy than I?

That walk schoolwards by West Street certainly was a *détour*. I might have gone a straighter road, but then I should not have seen *a certain window:* a little twinkling window in a gable of the Priory House, where the light used to be popped out at nine o'clock. T'other day, when we took over the King of France to Calais (his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence being in command), I must needs hire a postchaise from Dover, to look at that old window in the Priory House at Winchelsea. I went through the old tears, despairs, tragedies. I sighed as sentimentally, after forty years, as though the *infandi dolores* were fresh upon me, as though I were the schoolboy trudging back to his task, and taking a last look at his dearest joy. I used as a boy to try and pass that window at nine, and I know a prayer was said for the inhabitant of yonder chamber. She knew my holidays, and my hours of going to school and returning thence. If my little maid hung certain signals in that window (such as a flower, for example, to indicate all was well, a cross-curtain, and so forth), I hope she practised no very unjustifiable stratagems. We agreed to consider that she was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy; and we had few means of communication save these simple artifices, which are allowed to be fair in love and war. Monsieur de la Motte continued to live at our house, when his frequent affairs did not call him away thence; but, as I said, few words passed between us after that angry altercation already described, and he and I were never friends again.

He warned me that I had another enemy, and facts strangely confirmed the Chevalier's warning. One Sunday night, as I was going to school, a repetition of the brickbat assault was made upon

me, and this time the smart cocked hat which mother had given me came in for such a battering as effectually spoiled its modish shape. I told Dr. Barnard of this second attempt, and the good Doctor was not a little puzzled. He began to think that he was not so very wrong in espying a beam in Joseph Weston's eye. We agreed to keep the matter quiet, however; and a fortnight after, on another Sunday evening, as I was going on my accustomed route to school, whom should I meet but the Doctor and Mr. Weston walking together! A little way beyond the town gate there is a low wall round a field; and Dr. Barnard, going by this field *a quarter of an hour before my usual time for passing*, found Mr. Joseph Weston walking there behind the stone enclosure!

"Good-night, Denny," says the Doctor, when he and his companion met me; but surly Mr. Weston said nothing. "Have you had any more brickbats at your head, my boy?" the Rector continued.

I said I was not afraid. I had got a good pistol, and *a bullet* in it this time.

"He shot that scoundrel on the same day you were shot, Mr. Weston," says the Doctor.

"Did he?" growls the other.

"And your gun was loaded with the same-sized shot which Denis used to pepper *his* rascal," continues the Doctor. "I wonder if any of the crape went into the rascal's wound?"

"Sir," said Mr. Weston, with an oath, "what do you mean for to hint?"

"The very oath the fellow used whom Denny hit when your brother and I travelled together. I am sorry to hear you use the language of such scoundrels, Mr. Weston."

"If you dare to suspect me of anything unbecoming a gentleman, I'll have the law of you, Mr. Parson, that I will!" roars the other.

"Denis, mon garçon, tire ton pistolet de suite, et vise moi bien cet homme là," says the Doctor; and griping hold of Weston's arm, what does Dr. Barnard do but plunge his hand into Weston's pocket, and draw thence *another* pistol! He said afterwards he saw the brass butt sticking out of Weston's coat, as the two were walking together.

"What!" shrieks Mr. Weston; "is that young miscreant to go about armed, and tell everybody he will murder me; and ain't I for to defend myself? I walk in fear of my life for him!"

"You seem to me to be in the habit of travelling with pistols, Mr. Weston, and you know when people pass sometimes with money in their postchaises."

"You scoundrel, you—you boy! I call you to witness the words this man have spoken. He have insulted me, and libelled me, and I'll have the *lor* on him as sure as I am born!" shouts the angry man.

"Very good, Mr. Joseph Weston," replied the other fiercely. "And I will ask Mr. Blades, the surgeon, to bring the shot which he took from your eye, and the scraps of crape adhering to your face, and we will go to *lor* as soon as you like!"

Again I thought with a dreadful pang how Agnes was staying in that man's house, and how this quarrel would more than ever divide her from me; for now she would not be allowed to visit the rectory—the dear neutral ground where I sometimes hoped to see her.

Weston never went to law with the Doctor, as he threatened. Some awkward questions would have been raised, which he would have found a difficulty in answering: and though he averred that his accident took place on the day before our encounter with the *beau masque* on Dartford Common, a little witness on our side was ready to aver that Mr. Joe Weston left his house at the Priory before sunrise on the day when we took our journey to London, and that he returned the next morning with his eye bound up, when he sent for Mr. Blades, the surgeon of our town. Being awake, and looking from her window, my witness saw Weston mount his horse by the stable-lantern below, and heard him swear at the groom as he rode out at the gate. Curses used to drop naturally out of this nice gentleman's lips; and it is certain in his case that bad words and bad actions went together.

The Westons were frequently absent from home, as was the Chevalier our lodger. My dear little Agnes was allowed to come and see us at these times; or slipped out by the garden-door, and ran to see her nurse Duval, as she always called my mother. I did not understand for a while that there was any prohibition on the Westons' part to Agnes' visiting us, or know that there was such mighty wrath harboured against me in that house.

I was glad, for the sake of a peaceable life at home, as for honesty's sake too, that my mother did not oppose my determination to take no share in that smuggling business in which our house still

engaged. Any one who opposed mother in her own house had, I promise you, no easy time: but she saw that if she wished to make a gentleman of her boy, he must be no smuggler's apprentice; and when M. le Chevalier, being appealed to, shrugged his shoulders and said he washed his hands of me—"Eh bien, M. de la Motte!" says she, "we shall see if we can't pass ourselves of you and your patronage. I imagine that people are not always the better for it." "No," replied he, with a groan, and one of his gloomy looks, "my friendship may do people harm, but my enmity is worse—entendez-vous?" "Bah, bah!" says the stout old lady. "Denisot has a good courage of his own. What do you say to me about enmity to a harmless boy, M. le Chevalier?"

I have told how, on the night of the funeral of Madame de Saverne, Monsieur de la Motte sent me out to assemble his Mackerel men. Among these was the father of one of my town playfellows, by name Hookham, a seafaring man, who had met with an accident at his business—strained his back—and was incapable of work for a time. Hookham was an improvident man: the rent got into arrears. My grandfather was his landlord, and I fear me, not the most humane creditor in the world. Now, when I returned home after my famous visit to London, my patron, Sir Peter Denis, gave me two guineas, and my lady made me a present of another. No doubt I should have spent this money had I received it sooner in London; but in our little town of Winchelsea there was nothing to tempt me in the shops, except a fowling-piece at the pawnbroker's, for which I had a great longing. But Mr. Triboulet wanted four guineas for the gun, and I had but three, and would not go into debt. He would have given me the piece on credit, and frequently tempted me with it, but I resisted manfully, though I could not help hankering about the shop, and going again and again to look at the beautiful gun. The stock fitted my shoulder to a nicety. It was of the most beautiful workmanship. "Why not take it now, Master Duval?" Monsieur Triboulet said to me; "and pay me the remaining guinea when you please. Ever so many gentlemen have been to look at it; and I should be sorry now, indeed I should, to see such a beauty go out of the town." As I was talking to Triboulet (it may have been for the tenth time), some one came in with a telescope to pawn, and went away with fifteen shillings. "Don't you know who that is?" says Triboulet (who was a chatter-box of a man). "That is John Hook-

ham's wife. It is but hard times with them since John's accident. I have more of their goods here, and, *entre nous*, John has a hard landlord, and quarter-day is just at hand." I knew well enough that John's landlord was hard, as he was my own grandfather. "If I take my three pieces to Hookham," thought I, "he may find the rest of the rent." And so he did; and my three guineas went into my grandfather's pocket out of mine; and I suppose some one else bought the fowling-piece for which I had so longed.

"What, it is *you* who have given me this money, Master Denis?" says poor Hookham, who was sitting in his chair, groaning and haggard with his illness. "I can't take it—I ought not to take it."

"Nay," said I; "I should only have bought a toy with it, and if it comes to help you in distress, I can do without my plaything."

There was quite a chorus of benedictions from the poor family in consequence of this act of good nature; and I dare say I went away from Hookham's mightily pleased with myself and my own virtue.

It appears I had not been gone long when Mr. Joe Weston came in to see the man, and when he heard that I had relieved him, broke out into a flood of abuse against me, cursed me for a scoundrel and impertinent jackanapes, who was always giving myself the airs of a gentleman, and flew out of the house in a passion. Mother heard of the transaction, too, and pinched my ear with a grim satisfaction. Grandfather said nothing, but pocketed my three guineas when Mrs. Hookham brought them; and, though I did not brag about the matter much, everything is known in a small town, and I got a great deal of credit for a very ordinary good action.

And now, strangely enough, Hookham's boy confirmed to me what the Slindon priests had hinted to good Dr. Barnard. "Swear," says Tom (with that wonderful energy we used to have as boys)—"Swear, Denis, 'So help you, strike you down dead!' you never will tell!"

"So help me, strike me down dead!" said I.

"Well, then, those—you know who—the gentlemen—want to do you some mischief."

"What mischief can they do to an honest boy?" I asked.

"Oh, you don't know what they are," says Tom. "If they mean a man harm, harm will happen to him. Father says no man ever comes to good who stands in Mr. Joe's way. Where's John Wheeler, of Rye, who had a quarrel with Mr. Joe? He's in gaol. Mr. Barnes, of Playden, had words with him at Hastings market: and Barnes'

ricks were burnt down before six months were over. How was Thomas Berry taken, after deserting from the man-of-war? He is an awful man, Mr. Joe Weston is. Don't get into his way. Father says so. But you are not to tell—no, never, that he spoke about it. Don't go alone to Rye of nights, father says. Don't go on any—and you know what not—any *fishing* business, except with those you know." And so Tom leaves me with a finger to his lip and terror in his face.

As for the *fishing*, though I loved a sail dearly, my mind was made up by good Dr. Barnard's advice to me. I would have no more night-fishing such as I had seen sometimes as a boy; and when Rudge's apprentice one night invited me, and called me a coward for refusing to go, I showed him I was no coward as far as fisticuffs went, and stood out a battle with him, in which I do believe I should have proved conqueror, though the fellow was four years my senior, had not his ally, Miss Sukey Rudge, joined him in the midst of our fight, and knocked me down with the kitchen bellows, when they both belaboured me, as I lay kicking on the ground. Mr. Elder Rudge came in at the close of this dreadful combat, and his abandoned hussy of a daughter had the impudence to declare that the quarrel arose because I was rude to her—I, an innocent boy, who would as soon have made love to a negress as to that hideous, pock-marked, squinting, crooked, tipsy Sukey Rudge. I fall in love with Miss Squintum, indeed! I knew a pair of eyes at home so bright, innocent, and pure, that I should have been ashamed to look in them had I been guilty of such a rascally treason. My little maid of Winchelsea heard of this battle, as she was daily hearing slanders against me from those *worthy* Mr. Westons; but she broke into a rage at the accusation, and said to the assembled gentlemen (as she told my good mother in after days), "Denis Duval is *not* wicked. He is brave and he is good. And it is not true, the story you tell against him. It is a lie!"

And now, once more it happened that my little pistol helped to confound my enemies, and was to me, indeed, a *gute Wehr und Waffen*. I was for ever popping at marks with this little piece of artillery. I polished, oiled, and covered it with the utmost care, and kept it in my little room in a box of which I had the key. One day, by a most fortunate chance, I took my schoolfellow, Tom Parrot, who became a great crony of mine, into the room. We went upstairs, by the private door of Rudge's house, and not through the shop,

where Mademoiselle Figs and Monsieur the apprentice were serving their customers; and arrived in my room, we boys opened my box, examined the precious pistol, screw, barrel, flints, powder-horn, &c., locked the box, and went away to school, promising ourselves a good afternoon's sport on that half-holiday. Lessons over, I returned home to dinner, to find black looks from all the inmates of the house where I lived, from the grocer, his daughter, his apprentice, and even the little errand-boy who blacked the boots and swept the shop stared at me impertinently, and said, "Oh, Denis, ain't you going to catch it!"

"What is the matter?" I asked, very haughtily.

"Oh, my lord! we'll soon show your lordship what is the matter." (This was a silly nickname I had in the town and at school, where, I believe, I gave myself not a few airs since I had worn my fine new clothes, and paid my visit to London.) "This accounts for his laced waistcoat, and his guineas which he flings about. Does your lordship know these here shillings, and this half-crown? Look at them, Mr. Beales! See the marks on them which I scratched with my own hand before I put them into the till from which my lord took 'em."

Shillings?—till? What did they mean? "How dare you ask, you little hypocrite!" screams out Miss Rudge. "I marked them shillings and that half-crown with my own needle, I did; and of that I can take my Bible oath."

"Well, and what then?" I asked, remembering how this young woman had not scrupled to bear false witness in another charge against me.

"What then? They were in the till this morning, young fellow; and you know well enough where they were found afterwards," says Mr. Beales. "Come, come! This is a bad job. This is a sessions job, my lad."

"But where *were* they found?" again I asked.

"We'll tell you that before Squire Boroughs and the magistrates, you young vagabond!"

"You little viper, that have turned and stung me!"

"You precious young scoundrel!"

"You wicked little story-telling, good-for-nothing little thief!" cry Rudge, the apprentice, and Miss Rudge in a breath. And I stood bewildered by their outcry, and, indeed, not quite comprehending the charge which they made against me.

"The magistrates are sitting at Town Hall now. We will take he little villain there at once," says the grocer. "You bring the box long with you, constable. Lord! Lord! what will his poor grand-ather say?" And, wondering still at the charge made against me, was made to walk through the streets to the Town Hall, passing on he way by at least a score of our boys, who were enjoying their half-oliday. It was market-day, too, and the town full. It is forty years go, but I dream about that dreadful day still; and, an old gentle-an of sixty, fancy myself walking through Rye market, with Ir. Beales' fist clutching my collar!

A number of our boys joined this dismal procession, and accom-anied me into the magistrates' room. "Denis Duval up for stealing noney!" cries one. "This accounts for his fine clothes," sneers nother. "He'll be hung," says a third. The market people stare, nd crowd round, and jeer. I feel as if in a horrible nightmare. We pass under the pillars of the Market House, up the steps to the Town Hall, where the magistrates were, who chose market-day for their sittings.

How my heart throbbed, as I saw my dear Dr. Barnard seated among them.

"Oh, Doctor," cries poor Denis, clasping his hands, "*you* don't believe me guilty?"

"Guilty of what?" cries the Doctor, from the raised table round which the gentlemen sat.

"Guilty of stealing."

"Guilty of robbing my till."

"Guilty of taking two half-crowns, three shillings and twopence in copper, all marked," shriek out Rudge, the apprentice, and Miss Rudge in a breath.

"Denny Duval steal sixpences!" cries the Doctor; "I would as soon believe he stole the dragon off the church-steeple!"

"Silence, you boys! Silence in the court, there; or flog 'em and turn 'em all out," says the magistrates' clerk. Some of our boys—friends of mine—who had crowded into the place, were hurraying at my kind Doctor Barnard's speech.

"It is a most serious charge," says the clerk.

"But what *is* the charge, my good Mr. Hickson? You might as well put me into the dock as that——"

"Pray, sir, will you allow the business of the court to go on?"

asks the clerk, testily. "Make your statement, Mr. Rudge, and don't be afraid of anybody. You are under the protection of the court, sir."

And now for the first time I heard the particulars of the charge made against me. Rudge, and his daughter after him, stated (on oath, I am shocked to say) that for some time past they had missed money from the till; small sums of money, in shillings and half-crowns, they could not say how much. It might be two pounds, three pounds, in all; but the money was constantly going. At last, Miss Rudge said, she was determined to mark some money, and did so; and that money was found in that box which belonged to Denis Duval, and which the constable brought into court.

"Oh, gentlemen!" I cried out in agony, "it's a wicked, wicked lie, and it's not the first she has told about me. A week ago she said I wanted to kiss her, and she and Bevil both set on me; and I never wanted to kiss the nasty thing, so help me ——"

"You did, you lying wicked boy!" cries Miss Sukey. "And Edward Bevil came to my rescue; and you struck me, like a low mean coward; and we beat him well, and served him right, the little abandoned boy."

"And he kicked one of my teeth out—you did, you little villain!" roars Bevil, whose jaws had indeed suffered in that scuffle in the kitchen, when his precious sweetheart came to his aid with the bellows.

"He called me a coward, and I fought him fair, though he is ever so much older than me," whimpers out the prisoner. "And Sukey Rudge set upon me, and beat me too; and if I kicked him, he kicked me."

"And since this kicking match they have found out that you stole their money, have they?" says the Doctor, and turns round appealing to his brother magistrates.

"Miss Rudge, please to tell the rest of your story?" calls out the justices' clerk.

The rest of the Rudges' story was, that having their suspicions roused against me, they determined to examine my cupboards and boxes in my absence, to see whether the stolen objects were to be found, and in my box they discovered the two marked half-crowns, the three marked shillings, a brass-barrelled pistol, which were now in court. "Me and Mr. Bevil, the apprentice, found the money in

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the box; and we called my papa from the shop, and we fetched Mr. Beales, the constable, who lives over the way; and when the little monster came back from school, we seized upon him, and brought him before your worships, and hanging is what I said he would always come to," shrieks my enemy Miss Rudge.

"Why, I have the key of that box in my pocket now!" I cried out.

"We had means of opening it," says Miss Rudge, looking very red.

"Oh, if you have another key—," interposes the Doctor.

"We broke it open with the tongs and poker," says Miss Rudge, "me and Edward did—I mean Mr. Bevil, the apprentice."

"When?" said I, in a great tremor.

"When? When you was at school, you little miscreant! Half-an-hour before you came back to dinner."

"Tom Parrot, Tom Parrot!" I cried. "Call Tom Parrot, gentlemen. For goodness' sake call Tom!" I said, my heart beating so that I could hardly speak.

"Here I am, Denny!" pipes Tom in the crowd; and presently he comes up to their honours on the bench.

"Speak to Tom, Doctor, dear Doctor Barnard!" I continued. "Tom, when did I show you my pistol?"

"Just before ten o'clock school."

"What did I do?"

"You unlocked your box, took the pistol out of a handkerchief, showed it to me, and two flints, a powder-horn, a bullet-mould, and some bullets, and put them back again, and locked the box."

"Was there any money in the box?"

"There was nothing in the box but the pistol, and the bullets and things. I looked into it. It was as empty as my hand."

"And Denis Duval has been sitting by you in school ever since?"

"Ever since—except when I was called up and caned for my Corderius," says Tom, with a roguish look; and there was a great laughter and shout of applause from our boys of Pocock's when this testimony was given in their schoolfellow's favour.

My kind Doctor held his hand over the railing to me, and when I took it, my heart was so full that my eyes overflowed. I thought of little Agnes. What would she have felt if her Denis had been com-

mitted as a thief? I had such a rapture of thanks and gratitude that I think the pleasure of the acquittal was more than equivalent to the anguish of the accusation. What a shout all Pocock's boys set up, as I went out of the justice-room! We trooped joyfully down the stairs, and there were fresh shouts and huzzays as we got down to the market. I saw Mr. Joe Weston buying corn at a stall. He only looked at me once. His grinding teeth and his clenched riding-whip did not frighten me in the least now.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE LAST OF MY SCHOOL-DAYS.

AS our joyful procession of boys passed by Partlett's the pastry-cook's, one of the boys—Samuel Arbin—I remember the fellow well—a greedy boy, with a large beard and whiskers, though only fifteen years old—insisted that I ought to stand treat in consequence of my victory over my enemies. As far as a groat went, I said I was ready: for that was all the money I had.

"Oh, you storyteller!" cries the other. "What have you done with your three guineas which you were bragging about and showing to the boys at school? I suppose they were in the box when it was broken open." This Samuel Arbin was one of the boys who had jeered when I was taken in charge by the constable, and would have liked me to be guilty, I almost think. I am afraid I had bragged about my money when I possessed it, and may have shown my shining gold pieces to some of the boys in school.

"I know what he has done with his money!" broke in my steadfast crony Tom Parrot. "He has given away every shilling of it to a poor family who wanted it, and nobody ever knew *you* give away a shilling, Samuel Arbin," he says.

"Unless he could get eighteenpence by it!" sang out another little voice.

"Tom Parrot, I'll break every bone in your body, as sure as my name is Arbin!" cried the other, in a fury,

"Sam Arbin," said I, "after you have finished Tom, you must try me; or we'll do it now, if you like." To say the truth, I had long had an inclination to try my hand against Arbin. He was an ill friend to me, and amongst the younger boys a bully and a usurer to boot. The rest called out, "A ring! a ring! Let us go on the green and have it out!" being in their innocent years always ready for a fight.

But this one was never to come off: and (except in later days, when I went to revisit the old place, and ask for a half-holiday for my young successors at Pocock's) I was never again to see the

ancient school-room. While we boys were brawling in the market-place before the pastrycook's door, Dr. Barnard came up, and our quarrel was hushed in a moment.

"What! fighting and quarrelling already?" says the Doctor, sternly.

"It wasn't Denny's fault, sir!" cried out several of the boys. "It was Arbin began." And, indeed, I can say for myself that in all the quarrels I have had in life—and they have not been few—I consider I *always* have been in the right.

"Come along with me, Denny," says the Doctor, taking me by the shoulder: and he led me away and we took a walk in the town together, and as we passed old Ypres Tower, which was built by King Stephen, they say, and was a fort in old days, but is used as the town-prison now, "Suppose you had been looking from behind those bars now, Denny, and awaiting your trial at assizes? Yours would not have been a pleasant plight," Dr. Barnard said.

"But I was innocent, sir! You know I was!"

"Yes. Praise be where praise is due. But if you had not providentially been able to prove your innocence—if you and your friend Parrot had not happened to inspect your box, you would have been in yonder place. Ha! there is the bell ringing for afternoon service, which my good friend Dr. Wing keeps up. What say you? Shall we go and—and—offer up our thanks, Denny—for the—the immense peril from which—you have been—delivered?"

I remember how my dear friend's voice trembled as he spoke, and two or three drops fell from his kind eyes on my hand, which he held. I followed him into the church. Indeed and indeed I was thankful for my deliverance from a great danger, and even more thankful to have the regard of the true gentleman, the wise and tender friend, who was there to guide, and cheer, and help me.

As we read the last psalm appointed for that evening service, I remember how the good man, bowing his own head, put his hand upon mine; and we recited together the psalm of thanks to the Highest, who had had respect unto the lowly, and who had stretched forth His hand upon the furiousness of my enemies, and whose right hand had saved me.

Dr. Wing recognized and greeted his comrade when service was over: and the one doctor presented me to the other, who had been one of the magistrates on the bench at the time of my trial. Dr. Wing

ed us into his house, where dinner was served at four o'clock, and course the transactions of the morning were again discussed. at could be the reason of the persecution against me? Who tigated it? There were matters connected with this story garding which I *could* not speak. Should I do so, I must betray crets which were not mine, and which implicated I knew not om, and regarding which I must hold my peace. Now, they are crets no more. That old society of smugglers is dissolved long o: nay, I shall have to tell presently how I helped myself to break up. Grandfather, Rudge, the Chevalier, the gentlemen of the ory, were all connected in that great smuggling society of which I ve spoken; which had its depôts all along the coast and inland, d its correspondents from Dunkirk to Havre de Grace. I have id as a boy how I had been on some of these "fishing" peditions; and how, mainly by the effect of my dear Doctor's vice, I had withdrawn from all participation in this lawless and cked life. When Bevil called me coward for refusing to take a are in a night-cruise, a quarrel ensued between us, ending in that ttle royal which left us all sprawling, and cuffing and kicking each er on the kitchen floor. Was it rage at the injury to her eetheart's teeth, or hatred against myself, which induced my sweet iss Sukey to propagate calumnies against me? The provocation I d given certainly did not seem to warrant such a deadly enmity a prosecution and a perjury showed must exist. Howbeit, there s *a* reason for the anger of the grocer's daughter and apprentice. ey would injure me in any way they could; and (as in the before-ntioned case of the bellows) take the first weapon at hand to erthrow me.

As magistrates of the county, and knowing a great deal of what s happening round about them, and the character of their rishioners and neighbours, the two gentlemen could not, then, ess me too closely. Smuggled silk and lace, rum and brandy? ho had not these in his possession along the Sussex and Kent ast? "And, Wing, will you promise me there are no ribbons in your use but such as have paid duty?" asks one Doctor of the other.

"My good friend, it is lucky my wife has gone to her tea-table," plies Dr. Wing, "or I would not answer for the peace being kept."

"My dear Wing," continues Dr. Barnard, "this brandy punch is cellent, and is worthy of being smuggled. To run an anker of

brandy seems no monstrous crime; but when men engage in thes lawless ventures at all, who knows how far the evil will go? I bu ten kegs of brandy from a French fishing-boat, I land it under a li on the coast, I send it inland ever so far, be it from here to Yorl and all my consignees lie and swindle. I land it, and lie to th revenue officer. Under a lie (that is, a mutual secrecy,) I sell it t the landlord of 'The Bell' at Maidstone, say—where a good frien of ours, Denny, looked at his pistols. You remember the day whe his brother received the charge of shot in his face? My landlor sells it to a customer under a lie. We are all engaged in crime, cor spiracy, and falsehood; nay, if the revenue looks too closely after u we out with our pistols, and to crime and conspiracy add murde Do you suppose men engaged in lying every day will scruple about false oath in a witness-box? Crime engenders crime, sir. Roun about *us*, Wing, I know there exists a vast confederacy of frau greed, and rebellion. I name no names, sir. I fear men hig placed in the world's esteem, and largely endowed with its riches toc are concerned in the pursuit of this godless traffic of smuggling, an to what does it not lead them? To falsehood, to wickedness, t murder, to——"

"Tea, sir, if you please, sir," says John, entering. "My mistres and the young ladies are waiting."

The ladies had previously heard the story of poor Denis Duval persecution and innocence, and had shown him great kindness. B the time when we joined them after dinner, they had had time t perform a new toilette, being engaged to cards with some neighbour I knew Mrs. Wing was a customer to my mother for some of he French goods, and she would scarcely, on an ordinary occasion, hav admitted such a lowly guest to her table as the humble dressmaker boy; but she and the ladies were very kind, and my persecution an proved innocence had interested them in my favour.

"You have had a long sitting, gentlemen," says Mrs. Wing "I suppose you have been deep in politics, and the quarrel wit France."

"We have been speaking of France and French goods, my dear, said Dr. Wing, dryly.

"And of the awful crime of smuggling and encouraging smu gling, my dear Mrs. Wing!" cries my Doctor.

"Indeed, Dr. Barnard!" Now, Mrs. Wing and the young ladi

dressed in smart new caps, and ribbons, which my poor mother lied; and *they* turned red, and I turned as red as the cap- ons, as I thought how my good ladies had been provided. wonder Mrs. Wing was desirous to change the subject of ersation.

'What is this young man to do after his persecution?" she asked. e can't go back to Mr. Rudge—that horrid Wesleyan who has ised him of stealing."

No, indeed, I could not go back. We had not thought about the er until then. There had been a hundred things to agitate and rest me in the half-dozen hours since my apprehension and issal.

The Doctor would take me to Winchelsea in his chaise. I could go back to my persecutors, that was clear, except to reclaim my e property and my poor little boxes, which they had found means pen. Mrs. Wing gave me a hand, the young ladies a stately sey; and my good Dr. Barnard putting a hand under the arm of barber's grandson, we quitted these kind people. I was not on quarter-deck as yet, you see. I was but a humble lad belonging rdinary tradesmen.

By the way, I had forgotten to say that the two clergymen, during r after-dinner talk, had employed a part of it in examining me as ıy little store of learning at school, and my future prospects. Of n I had a smattering; French, owing to my birth, and mainly to de la Motte's instruction and conversation, I could speak better ı either of my two examiners, and with quite the good manner conversation. I was well advanced, too, in arithmetic and netry; and Dampier's Voyages were as much my delight as those inbad or my friends Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday. I could ; a good examination in navigation and seamanship, and could : an account of the different sailings, working-tides, double- udes, and so forth.

"And you can manage a boat at sea, too?" says Dr. Barnard, y. I blushed, I suppose. I *could* do that, and could steer, reef, pull an oar. At least I could do so two years ago.

"Denny, my boy," says my good Doctor, "I think 'tis time for : to leave this school at any rate, and that our friend Sir Peter ıt provide for thee."

However he may desire to improve in learning, no boy, I fancy,

is very sorry when a proposal is made to him to leave school. that I should be too glad if Sir Peter, my patron, would provi me. With the education I had, I ought to get on, the Docto and my grandfather he was sure would find the means for all me to appear like a gentleman.

To fit a boy for appearance on the quarter-deck, and to ( him to rank with others, I had heard would cost thirty or pounds a year at least. I asked, did Dr. Barnard think my father could afford such a sum?

"I know not your grandfather's means," Dr. Barnard ans smiling. "He keeps his own counsel. But I am very mistaken, Denny, if he cannot afford to make you a better allo than many a fine gentleman can give his son. I believe him rich. Mind, I have no precise reason for my belief; but I Master Denis, your good grandpapa's *fishing* has been very pro to him."

How rich was he? I began to think of the treasures i favourite "Arabian Nights." Did Dr. Barnard think grandfathe *very* rich? Well—the Doctor could not tell. The noti Winchelsea was that old Mr. Peter was very well to do. At an I must go back to him. It was impossible that I should sta the Rudge family after the insulting treatment I had had from The Doctor said he would take me home with him in his chais would pack my little trunks; and with this talk we reached R shop, which I entered not without a beating heart. There Rudge glaring at me from behind his desk, where he was postir books. The apprentice looked daggers at me as he came up th a trap-door from the cellar with a string of dip-candles; an charming Miss Susan was behind the counter tossing up her head.

"Ho! he's come back, have he?" says Miss Rudge. "A the cupboards is locked in the parlour, you can go in, and get tea there, young man."

"I am going to take Denis home, Mr. Rudge," said my Doctor. "He cannot remain with you, after the charge whic made against him this morning."

"Of having our marked money in his box? Do you go f dare for to say we put it there?" cries Miss, glaring now at me, at Dr. Barnard. "Go to say that! Please to say that c

Dr. Barnard, before Mrs. Barker and Mrs. Scales" (these were two women who happened to be in the shop purchasing goods). "Just be so good for to say before these ladies, that we have put the money in that boy's box, and we'll see whether there is not justice in Hengland for a poor girl whom you insult, because you are a doctor and a magistrate indeed! Eh, if I was a man, I wouldn't let some people's gowns, and cassocks, and bands, remain long on their backs—that I wouldn't. And some people wouldn't see a woman insulted if they wasn't cowards!" As she said this, Miss Sukey looked at the cellar-trap, above which the apprentice's head had appeared, but the Doctor turned also towards it with a glance so threatening, that Bevil let the trap fall suddenly down, not a little to my Doctor's amusement.

"Go and pack thy trunk, Denny. I will come back for thee in half-an-hour. Mr. Rudge must see that after being so insulted as you have been, you never as a gentleman can stay in this house."

"A pretty gentleman, indeed!" ejaculates Miss Rudge. "Pray, how long since was barbers gentlemen, I should like to know? Mrs. Scales mum, Mrs. Barker mum,—did you ever have your hair dressed by a gentleman? If you want for to have it, you must go to Mounseer Duval, at Winchelsea, which one of the name was hung, Mrs. Barker mum, for a thief and a robber, and he won't be the last neither!"

There was no use in bandying abuse with this woman. "I will go and get my trunk, and be ready, sir," I said to the Doctor; but his back was no sooner turned than the raging virago opposite me burst out with a fury of words, that I certainly can't remember after five-and-forty years. I fancy I see now the little green eyes gleaming hatred at me, the lean arms a-kimbo, the feet stamping as she hisses out every imaginable imprecation at my poor head.

"Will no man help me, and stand by and see that barber's boy insult me?" she cried. "Bevil, I say—Bevil! 'Elp me!"

I ran upstairs to my little room, and was not twenty minutes in making up my packages. I had passed years in that little room, and somehow grieved to leave it. The odious people had injured me, and yet I would have liked to part friends with them. I had passed delightful nights there in the company of Robinson Crusoe, Mariner, and Monsieur Galland and his Contes Arabes, and Hector of Troy, whose adventures and lamentable death (out of Mr. Pope) I could

recite by heart; and I had had weary nights, too, with my school-books, cramming that crabbed Latin grammar into my puzzled brain. With arithmetic, logarithms, and mathematics I have said I was more familiar. I took a pretty good place in our school with them, and ranked before many boys of greater age.

And now my boxes being packed (my little library being stowed away in that which contained my famous pistol), I brought them downstairs, with nobody to help me, and had them in the passage ready against Dr. Barnard's arrival. The passage is behind the back shop at Rudge's—(dear me! how well I remember it!)—and a door thence leads into a side-street. On the other side of this passage is the kitchen, where had been the fight which has been described already, and where we commonly took our meals.

I declare I went into that kitchen disposed to part friends with all these people—to forgive Miss Sukey her lies, and Bevil his cuffs, and all the past quarrels between us. Old Rudge was by the fire, having his supper; Miss Sukey opposite to him. Bevil, as yet, was minding the shop.

"I am come to shake hands before going away," I said.

"You're a-going, are you? And pray, sir, wherehever are you a-going of?" says Miss Sukey, over her tea.

"I am going home with Dr. Barnard. I can't stop in this house after you have accused me of stealing your money."

"Stealing! Wasn't the money in your box, you little beastly thief?"

"Oh, you young reprobate, I am surprised the bears don't come in and eat you," groans old Rudge. "You have shortened my life with your wickedness, that you have; and if you don't bring your good grandfather's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, I shall be surprised, that I shall. You, who come of a pious family—I tremble when I think of you, Denis Duval!"

"Tremble! Faugh! the wicked little beast! he makes me sick, he do!" cries Miss Sukey, with looks of genuine loathing.

"Let him depart from among us!" cries Rudge.

"Never do I wish to see his ugly face again!" exclaims the gentle Susan.

"I am going as soon as Dr. Barnard's chaise comes," I said. "My boxes are in the passage now, ready packed."

"Ready packed, are they? Is there any more of our money in

them, you little miscreant? Pa, is your silver tankard in the cupboard, and is the spoons safe?"

I think poor Sukey had been drinking to drive away the mortifications of the morning in the court-house. She became more excited and violent with every word she spoke, and shrieked and clenched her fists at me like a madwoman.

"Susanna, you have had false witness bore against you, my child; and you are not the first of your name. But be calm, be calm; it's our duty to be calm!"

"Eh!" (here she gives a grunt.) "Calm with that sneak—that pig—that liar—that beast! Where's Edward Bevil? Why don't he come forward like a man, and flog the young scoundrel's life out?" shrieks Susanna. "Oh, with this here horsewhip, how I would like to give it you!" (She clutched her father's whip from the dresser, where it commonly hung on two hooks.) "Oh, you—you villain! you have got your pistol, have you? Shoot me, you little coward, I ain't afraid of you! You have your pistol in your box, have you!" (I uselessly said as much in reply to this taunt.) "Stop! I say, Pa, —that young thief isn't going away with them boxes, and robbing the whole house as he may. Open the boxes this instant! We'll see he's stole nothing! Open them, I say!"

I said I would do nothing of the kind. My blood was boiling up at this brutal behaviour; and as she dashed out of the room to seize one of my boxes, I put myself before her, and sat down on it.

This was assuredly a bad position to take, for the furious vixen began to strike me and lash at my face with the riding-whip, and it was more than I could do to wrench it from her.

Of course, at this act of defence on my part, Miss Sukey yelled for help, and called out, "Edward! Ned Bevil! The coward is a-striking me! Help, Ned!" At this, the shop door flies open, and Sukey's champion is about to rush on me, but he breaks down over my other box with a crash of his shins, and frightful execrations. His nose is prone on the pavement; Miss Sukey is wildly laying about her with her horsewhip (and I think Bevil's jacket came in for most of the blows); we are all *higgledy-piggledy*, plunging and scuffling in the dark—when a carriage drives up, which I had not heard in the noise of action, and as the hall door opened, I was pleased to think that Dr. Barnard had arrived, according to his promise.

It was not the Doctor. The new comer wore a gown, but not a

cassock. Soon after my trial before the magistrates was over, our neighbour, John Jephson, of Winchelsea, mounted his cart and rode home from Rye market. He straightway went to our house, and told my mother of the strange scene which had just occurred, and of my accusation before the magistrates and acquittal. She begged, she ordered Jephson to lend her his cart. She seized whip and reins; she drove over to Rye; and I don't envy Jephson's old grey mare that journey with such a charioteer behind her. The door, opening from the street, flung light into the passage; and behold, we three warriors were sprawling on the floor in the higgledy-piggledy stage of the battle as my mother entered!

What a scene for a mother with a strong arm, a warm heart, and a high temper! Madame Duval rushed instantly at Miss Susan, and tore her shrieking from my body, which fair Susan was pummelling with the whip. A part of Susan's cap and tufts of her red hair were torn off by this maternal Amazon, and Susan was hurled through the open door into the kitchen, where she fell before her frightened father. I don't know how many blows my parent inflicted upon this creature. Mother might have slain her, but that the chaste Susanna, screaming shrilly, rolled under the deal kitchen table.

Madame Duval had wrenched away from this young person the horsewhip with which Susan had been operating upon the shoulders of her only son, and snatched the weapon as her fallen foe dropped. And now my mamma, seeing old Mr. Rudge sitting in a ghastly state of terror in the corner, rushed at the grocer, and in one minute, with butt and thong, inflicted a score of lashes over his face, nose, and eyes, for which anybody who chooses may pity him. "Ah, you will call my boy a thief, will you? Ah, you will take my Denny before the justices, will you? Prends moi ça, gredin! Attrape, lâche! Nimmt noch ein paar Schläge, Spitzbube!" cries out mother, in that polyglot language of English, French, High-Dutch, which she always used when excited. My good mother could shave and dress gentlemen's heads as well as any man; and faith I am certain that no man in all Europe got a better dressing than Mr. Rudge on that evening.

Bless me! I have written near a page to describe a battle which could not have lasted five minutes. Mother's cart was drawn up at the side-street whilst she was victoriously engaged within. Meanwhile, Dr. Barnard's chaise had come to the front door of the shop,

and he strode through it, and found us conquerors in possession of both fields. Since my last battle with Bevil, we both knew that I was more than a match for him. "In the king's name, I charge you drop your daggers," as the man says in the play. Our wars were over on the appearance of the man of peace. Mother left off plying the horsewhip over Rudge; Miss Sukey came out from under the table; Mr. Bevil rose, and slunk off to wash his bleeding face; and when the wretched Rudge whimpered out that he would have the law for this assault, the Doctor sternly said, "You were three to one during part of the battle, three to two afterwards, and after your testimony to-day, you perjured old miscreant, do you suppose any magistrate will believe you?"

No. Nobody did believe them. A punishment fell on these bad people. I don't know who gave the name, but Rudge and his daughter were called Ananias and Sapphira in Rye; and from that day the old man's affairs seemed to turn to the bad. When our boys of Pocock's met the grocer, his daughter, or his apprentice, the little miscreants would cry out, "Who put the money in Denny's box?" "Who bore false witness against his neighbour?" "Kiss the book, Sukey my dear, and tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, do you hear?" They had a dreadful life, that poor grocer's family. As for that rogue Tom Parrot, he comes into the shop one market-day when the place was full, and asks for a penn'orth of sugar-candy, in payment for which he offers a penny to old Rudge sitting at his books behind his high desk. "It's a good bit of money," says Tom (as bold as the brass which he was tendering). "It *ain't marked*, Mr. Rudge, like Denny Duval's money!" And, no doubt, at a signal from the young reprobate, a chorus of boys posted outside began to sing, "Ananias, Ananias! He pretends to be so pious! Ananias and Saphia ——" Well, well, the Saphia of these young wags was made to rhyme incorrectly with a word beginning with L. Nor was this the only punishment which befell the unhappy Rudge: Mrs. Wing and several of his chief patrons took away their custom from him and dealt henceforth with the opposition grocer. Not long after my affair, Miss Sukey married the toothless apprentice, who got a bad bargain with her, sweetheart or wife. I shall have to tell presently what a penalty they (and some others) had to pay for their wickedness; and of an act of contrition on poor Miss Sukey's part, whom, I am sure, I heartily forgive. Then was

cleared up that mystery (which I could not understand, that Dr. Barnard could not, or would not) of the persecutions directed against a humble lad, who never, except in self-defence, did harm to any mortal.

I shouldered the trunks, causes of the late lamentable war, and put them into mother's cart, into which I was about to mount, but the shrewd old lady would not let me take a place beside her. "I can drive well enough. Go thou in the chaise with the Doctor. He can talk to thee better, my son, than an ignorant woman like me. Neighbour Jephson told me how the good gentleman stood by thee in the justice-court. If ever I or mine can do anything to repay him, he may command me. Houp, Schimmel! Fort! Shalt soon be to house!" And with this she was off with my bag and baggage, as the night was beginning to fall.

I went out of the Rudges' house, into which I have never since set foot. I took my place in the chaise by my kind Dr. Barnard. We passed through Winchelsea gate, and dipped down into the marshy plain beyond, with bright glimpses of the Channel shining beside us, and the stars glittering overhead. We talked of the affair of the day, of course—the affair most interesting, that is, to me, who could think of nothing but magistrates, and committals, and acquittals. The Doctor repeated his firm conviction that there was a great smuggling conspiracy all along the coast and neighbourhood. Master Rudge was a member of the fraternity (which, indeed, I knew, having been out with his people once or twice, as I have told, to my shame). "Perhaps there were other people of my acquaintance who belonged to the same society?" the Doctor said, dryly. "Gee up, Daisy! There were other people of my acquaintance, who were to be found at Winchelsea as well as at Rye. Your precious one-eyed enemy is in it; so, I have no doubt, is Monsieur le Chevalier de la Motte; so is—can you guess the name of any one besides, Denny?"

"Yes, sir," I said, sadly; I knew my own grandfather was engaged in that traffic. "But if—if others are, I promise you, on my honour, I never will embark in it," I added.

"'Twill be more dangerous now than it has been. There will be obstacles to crossing the Channel which the contraband gentlemen have not known for some time past. Have you not heard the news?"

"What news?" Indeed I had thought of none but my own

affairs. A post had come in that very evening from London, bringing intelligence of no little importance even to poor me, as it turned out. And the news was that his Majesty the King, having been informed that a treaty of amity and commerce had been signed between the Court of France and certain persons employed by his Majesty's revolted subjects in North America, "has judged it necessary to send orders to his ambassador to withdraw from the French Court, . . . . and relying with the firmest confidence upon the zealous and affectionate support of his faithful people, he is determined to prepare to exert, if it should be necessary, all the forces and resources of his kingdoms, which he trusts will be adequate to repel every insult and attack, and to maintain and uphold the power and reputation of this country."

So as I was coming out of Rye court-house, thinking of nothing but my enemies, and my trials, and my triumphs, post-boys were galloping all over the land to announce that we were at war with France. One of them, as we made our way home, clattered past us with his twanging horn, crying his news of war with France. As we wound along the plain, we could see the French lights across the Channel. My life has lasted for fifty years since then, and scarcely ever since, but for very very brief intervals, has that baleful war-light ceased to burn.

The messenger who bore this important news arrived after we left Rye, but, riding at a much quicker pace than that which our Doctor's nag practised, overtook us ere we had reached our own town of Winchelsea. All our town was alive with the news in half-an-hour; and in the market-place, the public-houses, and from house to house, people assembled and talked. So we were at war again with our neighbours across the Channel, as well as with our rebellious children in America; and the rebellious children were having the better of the parent at this time. We boys at Pocock's had fought the war stoutly and with great elation at first. Over our maps we had pursued the rebels, and beaten them in repeated encounters. We routed them on Long Island. We conquered them at Brandywine. We vanquished them gloriously at Bunker's Hill. We marched triumphantly into Philadelphia with Howe. We were quite bewildered when we had to surrender with General Burgoyne at Saratoga; being, somehow, not accustomed to hear of British armies surrendering, and British valour being beat. "We had a half-holiday for Long Island," says Tom

Parrot, sitting next to me in school, "I suppose we shall be flogged all round for Saratoga." As for those Frenchmen, we knew of their treason for a long time past, and were gathering up wrath against them. *Protestant* Frenchmen, it was agreed, were of a different sort; and I think the banished Huguenots of France have not been unworthy subjects of our new sovereign.

There was one dear little Frenchwoman in Winchelsea who I own was a sad rebel. When Mrs. Barnard, talking about the war, turned round to Agnes and said, "Agnes my child, on what side are you?" Mademoiselle de Barr blushed very red, and said, "I am a French girl, and I am of the side of my country. Vive la France! vive le Roi!"

"Oh, Agnes! oh, you perverted, ungrateful little, little monster!" cries Mrs. Barnard, beginning to weep.

But the Doctor, far from being angry, smiled and looked pleased; and making Agnes a mock reverence, he said, "Mademoiselle de Saverne, I think a little Frenchwoman should be for France; and here is the tray, and we won't fight until after supper." And as he spoke that night the prayer appointed by his Church for the time of war—prayed that we might be armed with His defence who is the only giver of all victory—I thought I never heard the good man's voice more touching and solemn.

When this daily and nightly ceremony was performed at the Rectory, a certain little person who belonged to the Roman Catholic faith used to sit aloof, her spiritual instructors forbidding her to take part in our English worship. When it was over, and the Doctor's household had withdrawn, Miss Agnes had a flushed, almost angry face.

"But what am I to do, aunt Barnard?" said the little rebel. "If I pray for you, I pray that my country may be conquered, and that you may be saved and delivered out of our hands."

"No, faith, my child, I think we will not call upon thee for Amen," says the Doctor, patting her cheek.

"I don't know why you should wish to prevail over my country," whimpers the little maid. "I am sure I won't pray that any harm may happen to you, and aunt Barnard, and Denny—never, never!" And in a passion of tears she buried her head against the breast of the good man, and we were all not a little moved.

Hand in hand we two young ones walked from the Rectory to the

Priory House, which was only too near. I paused ere I rang at the bell, still holding her wistful little hand in mine.

"*You* will never be my enemy, Denny, will you?" she said, looking up.

"My dear," I faltered out, "I will love you for ever and ever!" I thought of the infant whom I brought home in my arms from the seashore, and once more my dearest maiden was held in them, and my heart throbbed with an exquisite bliss.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### I ENTER HIS MAJESTY'S NAVY.

I PROMISE you there was no doubt or hesitation next Sund regarding our good rector's opinions. Ever since the war w America began, he had, to the best of his power, exhorted his peo to be loyal, and testified to the authority of Cæsar. "War," he taug "is not altogether an evil; and ordained of Heaven, as our illnes and fevers doubtless are, for our good. It teaches obedience a contentment under privations; it fortifies courage; it tests loyalty; gives occasion for showing mercifulness of heart; moderation victory; endurance and cheerfulness under defeat. The brave w do battle victoriously in their country's cause leave a legacy of hono to their children. We English of the present day are the better f Creçy, and Agincourt, and Blenheim. I do not grudge the Scots th day of Bannockburn, nor the French their Fontenoy. Such valo proves the manhood of nations. When we have conquered t American rebellion, as I have no doubt we shall do, I trust it will found that these rebellious children of ours have comported themselv in a manner becoming our English race, that they have been har and resolute, merciful and moderate. In that Declaration of W against France, which has just reached us, and which interests England, and the men of this coast especially, I have no more dou in my mind that the right is on our side, than I have that Que Elizabeth had a right to resist the Spanish Armada. In an hour almost equal peril, I pray we may show the same watchfulness, co stancy, and valour; bracing ourselves to do the duty before us, a leaving the issue to the Giver of all Victory."

Ere he left the pulpit, our good rector announced that he wou call a meeting for next market-day in our town-hall—a meeting gentry, farmers, and seafaring men, to devise means for the defen of our coast and harbours. The French might be upon us any day and all our people were in a buzz of excitement, Volunteers an Fencibles patrolling our shores, and fishermen's glasses for ever o the look-out towards the opposite coast.

We had a great meeting in the town-hall, and of the speakers it was who should be most loyal to King and country. Subscriptions for a Defence Fund were straightway set afoot. It was determined the Cinque Port towns should raise a regiment of Fencibles. In Winchelsea alone the gentry and chief tradesmen agreed to raise a troop of volunteer horse to patrol along the shore and communicate with depôts of the regular military formed at Dover, Hastings, and Deal. The fishermen were enrolled to serve as coast and look-out men. From Margate to Folkestone the coast was watched and patrolled: and privateers were equipped and sent to sea from many of the ports along our line. On the French shore we heard of similar warlike preparations. The fishermen on either coast did not harm each other as yet, though presently they too fell to blows: and I have sad reason to know that a certain ancestor of mine did not altogether leave off his relations with his French friends.

However, at the meeting in the town-hall, grandfather came forward with a subscription and a long speech. He said that he and his co-religionists and countrymen of France had now for near a century experienced British hospitality and freedom; that when driven from home by Papist persecution, they had found protection here, and that now was the time for French Protestants to show that they were grateful and faithful subjects of King George. Grandfather's speech was very warmly received; that old man had lungs, and a knack of speaking, which never failed him. He could spin out sentences by the yard, as I knew, who had heard him expound for half hours together with that droning voice which had long ceased (Heaven help me!) to carry conviction to the heart of grandfather's graceless grandson.

When he had done, Mr. George Weston, of the Priory, spoke, and with a good spirit too. (He and *my dear friend, Mr. Joe*, were both present, and seated with the gentlefolks and magistrates at the raised end of the hall.) Mr. George said that as Mr. Duval had spoken for the French Protestants, he, for his part, could vouch for the loyalty of another body of men, the Roman Catholics of England. In the hour of danger he trusted that he and his brethren were as good subjects as any Protestants in the realm. And as a trifling test of his loyalty—though he believed his neighbour Duval was a richer man than himself (grandfather shrieked a "No, no!" and there was a roar of laughter in the hall)—he offered as a contribution to a defence fund to lay down two guineas for Mr. Duval's one!

"I will give my guinea, I am sure," says grandfather, very meekly "and may that poor man's mite be accepted and useful!"

"One guinea!" roars Weston; "I will give a hundred guineas!

"And I another hundred," says his brother. "We will show, a Roman Catholic gentry of England, that we are not inferior in loyalt to our Protestant brethren."

"Put my fazer-in-law Peter Duval down for one 'ondred guinea! calls out my mother, in her deep voice. "Put me down for twenty fife guinea, and my son Denis for twenty-fife guinea! We have eaten English bread and we are grateful, and we sing with all our heart God save King George!"

Mother's speech was received with great applause. Farmer gentry, shopkeepers, rich and poor, crowded forward to offer the subscription. Before the meeting broke up, a very handsome sur was promised for the arming and equipment of the Winchelse Fencibles; and old Colonel Evans, who had been present at Minde and Fontenoy, and young Mr. Barlow, who had lost a leg at Brand wine, said that they would superintend the drilling of the Winchelse Fencibles, until such time as his Majesty should send officers of h own to command the corps. It was agreed that everybody spok and acted with public spirit. "Let the French land!" was our cr "The men of Rye, the men of Winchelsea, the men of Hasting will have a guard of honour to receive them on the shore!"

That the French intended to try and land was an opinion pretty general amongst us, especially when his Majesty's proclamatio came, announcing the great naval and military armaments which th enemy was preparing. We had *certain communications* with Boulogn Calais, and Dunkirk still, and our fishing-boats sometimes went as fa as Ostend. Our informants brought us full news of all that wa going on in those ports; of the troops assembled there, and roya French ships and privateers fitted out. I was not much surprise one night to find our old Boulogne ally Bidois smoking his pipe wit grandfather in the kitchen, and regaling himself with a glass of hi own brandy, which I know had not paid unto Cæsar Cæsar's due The pigeons on the hill were making their journeys still. Once when I went up to visit Farmer Perreau, I found M. de la Motte an a companion of his sending off one of these birds, and La Motte' friend said sulkily, in German, "What does the little *Spitzbube* d here?" "Versteht vielleicht Deutsch," murmured La Motte

hurriedly, and turned round to me with a grin of welcome, and asked news of grandfather and my mother.

This ally of the Chevalier's was a Lieutenant Lütterloh, who had served in America in one of the Hessian regiments on our side, and who was now pretty often in Winchelsea, where he talked magnificently about war and his own achievements, both on the Continent and in our American provinces. He lived near Canterbury as I heard. I guessed, of course, that he was one of the "Mackerel" party, and engaged in smuggling, like La Motte, the Westons, and my graceless old grandfather and his ally, Mr. Rudge, of Rye. I shall have presently to tell how bitterly Monsieur de la Motte had afterwards to rue his acquaintance with this German.

Knowing the Chevalier's intimacy with the gentlemen connected with the Mackerel fishery, I had little cause to be surprised at seeing him and the German captain together; though a circumstance now arose, which might have induced me to suppose him engaged in practices yet more lawless and dangerous than smuggling. I was walking up to the hill—must I let slip the whole truth, madame, in my memoirs? Well, it never did or will hurt anybody; and, as it only concerns you and me, may be told without fear. I frequently, I say, walked up the hill to look at these pigeons, for a certain young person was a great lover of pigeons too, and occasionally would come to see Farmer Perreau's columbarium. Did I love the sight of this dear white dove more than any other? Did it come sometimes fluttering to my heart? Ah! the old blood throbs there with the mere recollection. I feel—shall we say how many years younger, my dear? In fine, those little walks to the pigeon-house are among the sweetest of all our stores of memories.

I was coming away, then, once from this house of billing and cooing, when I chanced to espy an old schoolmate, Thomas Measom by name, who was exceedingly proud of his new uniform as a private of our regiment of Winchelsea Fencibles, was never tired of wearing it, and always walked out with his firelock over his shoulder. As I came up to Tom, he had just discharged his piece, and hit his bird too. One of Farmer Perreau's pigeons lay dead at Tom's feet—one of the carrier pigeons, and the young fellow was rather scared at what he had done, especially when he saw a little piece of paper tied under the wing of the slain bird.

He could not read the message, which was written in our German

handwriting, and was only in three lines, which I was better able to decipher than Tom. I supposed at first that the message had to do with the smuggling business, in which so many of our friends were engaged, and Measom walked off rather hurriedly, being by no means anxious to fall into the farmer's hands, who would be but ill-pleased at having one of his birds killed.

I put the paper in my pocket, not telling Tom what I thought about the matter: but I did have a thought, and determined to converse with my dear Doctor Barnard regarding it. I asked to see him at the Rectory, and there read to him the contents of the paper which the poor messenger was bearing when Tom's ball brought him down.

My good Doctor was not a little excited and pleased when I interpreted the pigeon's message to him, and especially praised me for my reticence with Tom upon the subject. "It may be a mare's nest we have discovered, Denny, my boy," says the Doctor; "it may be a matter of importance. I will see Colonel Evans on this subject to-night." We went off to Mr. Evans's lodgings: he was the old officer who had fought under the Duke of Cumberland, and was, like the Doctor, a justice of peace for our county. I translated for the Colonel the paper, which was to the following effect:—

[Left blank by Mr. Thackeray.]

Mr. Evans looked at a paper before him, containing an authorised list of the troops at the various Cinque Port stations, and found the poor pigeon's information quite correct. "Was this the Chevalier's writing?" the gentleman asked. No, I did not think it was M. de la Motte's handwriting. Then I mentioned the other German in whose company I had seen M. de la Motte: the Monsieur Lütterloh whom Mr. Evans said he knew quite well. "If Lütterloh is engaged in the business," said Mr. Evans, "we shall know more about it;" and he whispered something to Dr. Barnard. Meanwhile he praised me exceedingly for my caution, enjoined me to say nothing regarding the matter, and to tell my comrade to hold his tongue.

As for Tom Measom he was less cautious. Tom talked about his adventures to one or two cronies; and to his parents, who were tradesmen like my own. They occupied a snug house in Winchelsea, with a garden and a good paddock. One day their horse was found dead in the stable. Another day their cow burst and died. There

used to be strange acts of revenge perpetrated in those days; and farmers, tradesmen, or gentry, who rendered themselves obnoxious to *certain parties*, had often to rue the enmity which they provoked. That my unhappy old grandfather was, and remained in the smugglers' league, I fear is a fact which I can't deny or palliate. He paid a heavy penalty to be sure, but my narrative is not advanced far enough to allow of my telling how the old man was visited for his sins.

There came to visit our Winchelsea magistrates Captain Pearson, of the "Serapis" frigate, then in the Downs; and I remembered this gentleman, having seen him at the house of my kind patron, Sir Peter Denis, in London. Mr. Pearson also recollected me as the little boy who had shot the highwayman; and was much interested when he heard of the carrier pigeon, and the news which he bore. It appeared that he, as well as Colonel Evans, was acquainted with Mr. Lütterloh. "You are a good lad," the Captain said; "but we know," said the Captain, "all the news those birds carry."

All this time our whole coast was alarmed, and hourly expectant of a French invasion. The French fleet was said to outnumber ours in the Channel: the French army, we knew, was enormously superior to our own. I can remember the terror and the excitement; the panic of some, the braggart behaviour of others; and specially I recall the way in which our church was cleared one Sunday, by a rumour which ran through the pews, that the French were actually landed. How the people rushed away from the building, and some of them whom I remember the loudest amongst the braggarts, and singing their "Come if you dare!" Mother and I in our pew, and Captain Pearson in the rector's, were the only people who sat out the sermon, of which Doctor Barnard would not abridge a line, and which, I own, I thought was extremely tantalizing and provoking. He gave the blessing with more than ordinary slowness and solemnity; and had to open his own pulpit-door and stalk down the steps without the accompaniment of his usual escort, the clerk, who had skipped out of his desk, and run away like the rest of the congregation. Doctor Barnard had me home to dinner at the Rectory; my good mother being much too shrewd to be jealous of this kindness shown to me and not to her. When she waited upon Mrs. Barnard with her basket of laces and perfumeries, mother stood as became her station as a tradeswoman. "For thee, my son, 'tis different," she said. "I

will have thee be a gentleman." And faith, I hope I have done the best of my humble endeavour to fulfil the good lady's wish.

The war, the probable descent of the French, and the means of resisting the invasion, of course formed the subject of the gentlemen's conversation; and though I did not understand all that passed, I was made to comprehend subsequently, and may as well mention facts here which only came to be explained to me later. The pigeons took over certain information to France, in return for that which they brought. By these and other messengers our Government was kept quite well instructed as to the designs and preparations of the enemy, and I remember how it was stated that his Majesty had occult correspondents of his own in France, whose information was of surprising accuracy. Master Lütterloh dabbled in the information line. He had been a soldier in America, a recruiting-crimp here, and I know not what besides; but the information he gave was given under the authority of his employers, to whom in return he communicated the information he received from France. The worthy gentleman was, in fact, a spy by trade; and though he was not born to be hanged, came by an awful payment for his treachery, as I shall have to tell in due time. As for M. de la Motte, the gentlemen were inclined to think that his occupation was smuggling, not treason, and in that business the Chevalier was allied with scores, nay hundreds, of people round about him. One I knew, my pious grandpapa: other two lived at the Priory, and I could count many more even in our small town, namely, all the Mackerel men to whom I had been sent on the night of poor Madame de Saverne's funeral.

Captain Pearson shook me by the hand very warmly when I rose to go home, and I saw, by the way in which the good Doctor regarded me, that he was meditating some special kindness in my behalf. It came very soon, and at a moment when I was plunged in the very dismalest depths of despair. My dear little Agnes, though a boarder at the house of those odious Westons, had leave given to her to visit Mrs. Barnard; and that kind lady never failed to give me some signal by which I knew that my little sweetheart was at the Rectory. One day the message would be, "The rector wants back his volume of the 'Arabian Nights,' and Denis had better bring it." Another time, my dearest Mrs. Barnard would write on a card, "You may come to tea, if you have done your mathematics well," or, "You may have a French lesson," and so forth—and there, sure enough, would

e my sweet little tutoress. How old, my dear, was Juliet when she nd young Capulet began their loves? My sweetheart had not done laying with dolls when our little passion began to bud: and the sweet talisman of innocence I wore in my heart hath never left me through life, and shielded me from many a temptation.

Shall I make a clean breast of it? We young hypocrites used to write each other little notes, and pop them in certain cunning corners known to us two. Juliet used to write in a great round hand in French; Romeo replied, I dare say, with doubtful spelling.

We had devised sundry queer receptacles where our letters lay *poste restante*. There was the China pot-pourri jar on the Japan cabinet in the drawing-room. There, into the midst of the roses and spices, two cunning young people used to thrust their hands, and stir about spice and rose-leaves, until they lighted upon a little bit of folded paper more fragrant and precious than all your flowers and cloves. Then in the hall we had a famous post-office, namely, the barrel of the great blunderbuss over the mantelpiece, from which hung a ticket on which "loaded" was written, only I knew better, having helped Martin, the Doctor's man, to clean the gun. Then in the churchyard under the wing of the left cherub on Sir Jasper Billing's tomb, there was a certain hole in which we put little scraps of paper written in a cipher devised by ourselves, and on these scraps of paper we wrote:—well, can you guess what? We wrote the old song which young people have sung ever since singing began. We wrote "Amo, amas," &c., in our childish handwriting. Ah! thanks be to heaven, though the hands tremble a little now, they write the words still! My dear, the last time I was in Winchelsea, I went and looked at Sir Jasper's tomb, and at the hole under the cherub's wing; there was only a little mould and moss there. Mrs. Barnard found and read one or more of these letters, as the dear lady told me afterwards, but there was no harm in them; and when the Doctor put on his *grand sérieux* (as to be sure he had a right to do), and was for giving the culprits a scolding, his wife reminded him of a time when he was captain of Harrow School, and found time to write other exercises than Greek and Latin to a young lady who lived in the village. Of these matters, I say, she told me in later days; in all days, after our acquaintance began, she was my truest friend and protectress.

But this dearest and happiest season of my life (for so I think it, though I am at this moment happy, most happy, and thankful) was to

come to an abrupt ending, and poor Humpty Dumpty having the wall of bliss, was to have a great and sudden fall, whi while, perfectly crushed and bewildered him. I have said wh came to my companion Tom Measom, for meddling in M Lütterloh's affairs and talking of them. Now, there were t knew Meinherr's secret, Tom Measom, namely, and Denis and though Denis held his tongue about the matter, e conversing with the rector and Captain Pearson, Lütterloh know that I had read and explained the pigeon-despatch c Measom had shot the bearer; and, indeed, it was Captain himself, with whom the German had sundry private dealings, Lütterloh's informer. Lütterloh's rage, and that of his acc against me, when they learned the unlucky part I had ha discovery, were still greater than their wrath against Measo Chevalier de la Motte, who had once been neutral, and even me, was confirmed in a steady hatred against me, and held r enemy whom he was determined to get out of his wa hence came that catastrophe which precipitated Humpy Duval, Esq., off the wall from which he was gazing at his bel she disported in her garden below.

One evening—shall I ever forget that evening? It was [Left blank by Mr. Thackeray]— after my little maiden had bee tea with Mrs. Barnard, I had leave to escort her to her l Mr. Weston's at the Priory, which is not a hundred yards f Rectory door. All the evening the company had been talki battle and danger, and invasion, and the war news from Fra America; and my little maiden sat silent, with her great eyes at one speaker and another, and stitching at her sampler. A the clock tolled the hour of nine, when Miss Agnes must retu guardian. I had the honour to serve as her escort, and wo wished the journey to be ten times as long as that brief one the two houses. "Good night, Agnes!" "Good night, On Sunday I shall see you!" We whisper one little minu the stars; the little hand lingers in mine with a soft press hear the servants' footsteps over the marble floor within, a gone. Somehow, at night and at morning, at lessons and pl always thinking about this little maid.

"I shall see you on Sunday," and this was Friday! F interval seemed long to me. Little did either of us kn

a long separation was before us, and what strange changes, dangers, adventures, I was to undergo ere I again should press that dearest hand.

The gate closed on her, and I walked away by the church-wall, and towards my own home. I was thinking of that happy, that unforgotten night of my childhood, when I had been the means of rescuing the dearest little maiden from an awful death; how, since then, I had cherished her with my love of love; and what a blessing she had been to my young life. For many years she was its only cheerer and companion. At home I had food and shelter, and, from mother at least, kindness, but no society; it was not until I became a familiar of the good Doctor's roof that I knew friendship and kind companionship. What gratitude ought I not to feel for a boon so precious as there was conferred on me? Ah, I vowed, I prayed, that I might make myself worthy of such friends; and so was sauntering homewards, lost in these happy thoughts, when—when something occurred which at once decided the whole course of my after-life.

This something was a blow with a bludgeon across my ear and temple which sent me to the ground utterly insensible. I remember half-a-dozen men darkling in an alley by which I had to pass, then a scuffle and an oath or two, and a voice crying, "Give it him, curse him!" and then I was down on the pavement as flat and lifeless as the flags on which I lay. When I woke up, I was almost blinded with blood; I was in a covered cart with a few more groaning wretches; and when I uttered a moan, a brutal voice growled out with many oaths an instant order to be silent, or my head should be broken again. I woke up in a ghastly pain and perplexity, but presently fainted once more. When I awoke again to a half-consciousness I felt myself being lifted from the cart and carried, and then flung into the bows of a boat, where I suppose I was joined by the rest of the dismal cart's company. Then some one came and washed my bleeding head with salt-water (which made it throb and ache very cruelly). Then the man, whispering, "I'm a friend," bound my forehead tight with a handkerchief, and the boat pulled out to a brig that was lying as near to land as she could come, and the same man who had struck and sworn at me would have stabbed me once more as I reeled up the side, but that my friend interposed in my behalf. It was Tom Hookham, to whose family I had given the three guineas, and who assuredly saved my life on that day, for

the villain who attempted it afterwards confessed that he intended to do me an injury. I was thrust into the forepeak with three or four more maimed and groaning wretches, and, the wind serving, the lugger made for her destination, whatever that might be. What a horrid night of fever and pain it was! I remember I fancied I was carrying Agnes out of the water; I called out her name repeatedly, as Tom Hookham informed me, who came with a lantern and looked at us poor wretches huddled in our shed. Tom brought me more water, and in pain and fever I slept through a wretched night.

In the morning our tender came up with a frigate that was lying off a town, and I was carried up the ship's side on Hookham's arm. The Captain's boat happened to pull from shore at the very same time, and the Captain and his friends, and our wretched party of pressed men with their captors, thus stood face to face. My wonder and delight were not a little aroused when I saw the Captain was no other than my dear rector's friend, Captain Pearson. My face was bound up, and so pale and bloody as to be scarcely recognizable. "So, my man," he said, rather sternly, "you have been for fighting, have you? This comes of resisting men employed on his Majesty's service."

"I never resisted," I said; "I was struck from behind, Captain Pearson."

The Captain looked at me with a haughty, surprised air. Indeed, a more disreputable-looking lad he scarcely could see. After a moment he said, "Why, bless my soul, is it you, my boy? Is it young Duval?"

"Yes, sir," I said; and whether from emotion, or fever, or loss of blood and weakness, I felt my brain going again, and once more fainted and fell.

When I came to myself, I found myself in a berth in the "Serapis," where there happened to be but one other patient. I had had fever and delirium for a day, during which it appears I was constantly calling out, "Agnes, Agnes!" and offering to shoot highwaymen. A very kind surgeon's mate had charge of me, and showed me much more attention than a poor wounded lad could have had a right to expect in my wretched humiliating position. On the fifth day I was well again, though still very weak and pale; but not too weak to be unable to go to the Captain when he sent for me to his cabin. My friend the surgeon's mate showed me the way.

DENIS'S VALET.

Captain Pearson was writing at his table, but sent away his secretary, and when the latter was gone shook hands with me very kindly, and talked unreservedly about the strange accident which had brought me on board his ship. His officer had information, he said, "and I had information," the Captain went on to say, "that some very good seamen of what we called the Mackerel party were to be taken at a public-house in Winchelsea," and his officer netted a half-dozen of them there, "who will be much better employed" (says Captain Pearson) "in serving the King in one of his Majesty's vessels, than in cheating him on board their own. You were a stray fish that was caught along with the rest. I know your story. I have talked it over with our good friends at the Rectory. For a young fellow, you have managed to make yourself some queer enemies in your native town; and you are best out of it. On the night when I first saw you, I promised our friends to take you as a first-class volunteer. In due time you will pass your examination, and be rated as a midshipman. Stay—your mother is in Deal. You can go ashore, and she will fit you out. Here are letters for you. I wrote to Dr. Barnard as soon as I found who you were."

With this, I took leave of my good patron and captain, and ran off to read my two letters. One, from Mrs. Barnard and the Doctor conjointly, told how alarmed they had been at my being lost, until Captain Pearson wrote to say how I had been found. The letter from my good mother informed me, in her rough way, how she was waiting at the "Blue Anchor Inn" in Deal, and would have come to me; but my new comrades would laugh at a rough old woman coming off in a shore-boat to look after her boy. It was better that I should go to her at Deal, where I should be fitted out in a way becoming an officer in his Majesty's service. To Deal accordingly I went by the next boat; the good-natured surgeon's mate, who had attended me and taken a fancy to me, lending me a clean shirt, and covering the wound on my head neatly, so that it was scarcely seen under my black hair. "Le pauvre cher enfant! comme il est pâle!" How my mother's eyes kindled with kindness as she saw me! The good soul insisted on dressing my hair with her own hands, and tied it in a smart queue with a black ribbon. Then she took me off to a tailor in the town, and provided me with an outfit a lord's son might have brought on board. My uniforms were ready in a very short time. Twenty-four hours after they were ordered Mr. Levy brought them

to our inn, and I had the pleasure of putting them on; and walked on the Parade, with my hat cocked, my hanger by my side, and mother on my arm. Though I was perfectly well pleased with myself, I think she was the prouder of the two. To one or two tradesmen and their wives, whom she knew, she gave a most dignified nod of recognition this day; but passed on without speaking, as if she would have them understand that they ought to keep their distance when she was in such fine company. "When I am in the shop, I am in the shop, and my customers' very humble servant," said she; "but when I am walking on Deal Parade with thee, I am walking with a young gentleman in his Majesty's navy. And Heaven has blessed us of late, my child, and thou shalt have the means of making as good a figure as any young officer in the service." And she put such a great heavy purse of guineas into my pocket, that I wondered at her bounty. "Remember, my son," added she, "thou art a gentleman now. Always respect yourself. Tradespeople are no company for thee. For me 'tis different. I am but a poor hairdresser and shopkeeper." We supped together at the "Anchor," and talked about home, that was but two days off, and yet so distant. She never once mentioned my little maiden to me, nor did I somehow dare to allude to her. Mother had prepared a nice bedroom for me at the inn, to which she made me retire early, as I was still weak and faint after my fever; and when I was in my bed she came and knelt down by it, and with tears rolling down her furrowed face, offered up a prayer in her native German language, that He who had been pleased to succour me from perils hitherto, would guard me for the future, and watch over me in the voyage of life which was now about to begin. Now, as it is drawing to its close, I look back at it with an immense awe and thankfulness, for the strange dangers from which I have escaped, the great blessings I have enjoyed.

I wrote a long letter to Mrs. Barnard, narrating my adventures as cheerfully as I could, though, truth to say, when I thought of home and a little Someone there, a large tear or two blotted my paper, but I had reason to be grateful for the kindness I had received, and was not a little elated at being actually a gentleman, and in a fair way to be an officer in his Majesty's navy.

As I was strutting on the Mall, on the second day of my visit to Deal, what should I see but my dear Dr. Barnard's well-known postchaise nearing us from the Dover Road? The Doctor and his

e looked with a smiling surprise at my altered appearance; and as
:y stepped out of their chaise at the inn, the good lady fairly put
r arms round me, and gave me a kiss. Mother, from her room,
w the embrace, I suppose. "Thou hast found good friends there,
enis, my son," she said, with sadness in her deep voice. "'Tis
:ll. They can befriend thee better than I can. Now thou art well,
may depart in peace. When thou art ill, the old mother will come
thee, and will bless thee always, my son." She insisted upon
tting out on her return homewards that afternoon. She had friends
Hythe, Folkestone, and Dover (as I knew well), and would put up
ith one or other of them. She had before packed my new chest
ith wonderful neatness. Whatever her feelings might be at our
rting, she showed no signs of tears or sorrow, but mounted her
tle chaise in the inn-yard, and, without looking back, drove away
ı her solitary journey. The landlord of the "Anchor" and his wife
ide her farewell, very cordially and respectfully. They asked me,
ould I not step into the bar and take a glass of wine or spirits? I
ve said that I never drank either; and suspect that my mother
mished my host with some of these stores out of those fishing-boats
which she was owner. "If I had an only son, and such a good-
oking one," Mrs. Boniface was pleased to say (can I, after such a
e compliment, be so ungrateful as to forget her name?)—"If I
d an only son, and could leave him as well off as Mrs. Duval can
ve you, *I* wouldn't send him to sea in war-time, that I wouldn't."
And though you don't drink any wine, some of your friends on
ard may," my landlord added, "and they are always welcome at
: 'Blue Anchor.'" This was not the first time I had heard that my
ther was rich. "If she be so," I said to my host, "indeed it is
re than I know." On which he and his wife both commended me
my caution; adding with a knowing smile, "We know more than
tell, Mr. Duval. Have you ever heard of Mr. Weston? Have
u ever heard of Monsieur de la Motte? We know where Boulogne
and Ost——" "Hush, wife!" here breaks in my landlord. "If
: Captain don't wish to talk, why should he? There is the bell
ging from the 'Benbow' and your dinner going up to the Doctor,
:. Duval." It was indeed as he said, and I sat down in the
npany of my good friends, bringing a fine appetite to their table.
The Doctor on his arrival had sent a messenger to his friend,
ptain Pearson, and whilst we were at our meal, the Captain arrived

in his own boat from the ship, and insisted that Dr. and Mrs. Barnard should take their dessert in his cabin on board. This procured Mr. Denis Duval the honour of an invitation, and I and my new sea-chest were accommodated in the boat and taken to the frigate. My box was consigned to the gunner's cabin, where my hammock was now slung. After sitting a short time at Mr. Pearson's table, a brother-midshipman gave me a hint to withdraw, and I made the acquaintance of my comrades, of whom there were about a dozen on board the "Serapis." Though only a volunteer, I was taller and older than many of the midshipmen. They knew who I was, of course—the son of a shopkeeper at Winchelsea. Then, and afterwards, I had my share of rough jokes, you may be sure; but I took them with good humour; and I had to fight my way as I had learned to do at school before. There is no need to put down here the number of black eyes and bloody noses which I received and delivered. I am sure I bore but little malice: and, thank heaven, never wronged a man so much as to be obliged to hate him afterwards. Certain men there were who hated *me:* but they are gone, and I am here, with a pretty clear conscience, heaven be praised; and little the worse for their enmity.

The first lieutenant of our ship, Mr. Page, was related to Mrs. Barnard, and this kind lady gave him such a character of her very grateful, humble servant, and narrated my adventures to him so pathetically, that Mr. Page took me into his special favour, and interested some of my messmates in my behalf. The story of the highwayman caused endless talk and jokes against me which I took in good part, and established my footing among my messmates by adopting the plan I had followed at school, and taking an early opportunity to fight a well-known bruiser amongst our company of midshipmen. You must know they called me "Soapsuds," "Powder-puff," and like names, in consequence of my grandfather's known trade of hairdresser; and one of my comrades bantering me one day, cried, "I say, Soapsuds, where was it you hit the highwayman?" "There!" said I, and gave him a clean left-handed blow on his nose, which must have caused him to see a hundred blue lights. I know about five minutes afterwards he gave me just such another blow; and we fought it out and were good friends ever after. What is this? Did I not vow as I was writing the last page yesterday that I would not say a word about my prowess at fisticuffs? You see we are ever

making promises to be good, and forgetting them. I suppose other people can say as much.

Before leaving the ship my kind friends once more desired to see me, and Mrs. Barnard, putting a finger to her lip, took out from her pocket a little packet, which she placed in my hand. I thought she was giving me money, and felt somehow disappointed at being so treated by her. But when she was gone to shore I opened the parcel, and found a locket there, and a little curl of glossy black hair. Can you guess whose? Along with the locket was a letter in French, in a large girlish hand, in which the writer said, that night and day she prayed for her dear Denis. And where, think you, the locket is now? where it has been for forty-two years, and where it will remain when a faithful heart that beats under it hath ceased to throb.

At gunfire our friends took leave of the frigate, little knowing the fate that was in store for many on board her. In three weeks from that day what a change! The glorious misfortune which befell us is written in the annals of our country.

On the very evening whilst Captain Pearson was entertaining his friends from Winchelsea, he received orders to sail for Hull, and place himself under the command of the Admiral there. From the Humber we presently were despatched northward to Scarborough. There had been not a little excitement along the whole northern coast for some time past, in consequence of the appearance of some American privateers, who had ransacked a Scottish nobleman's castle, and levied contributions from a Cumberland seaport town. As we were close in with Scarborough a boat came off with letters from the magistrates of that place, announcing that this squadron had actually been seen off the coast. The commodore of this wandering piratical expedition was known to be a rebel Scotchman: who fought with a rope round his neck to be sure. No doubt many of us youngsters vapoured about the courage with which we would engage him, and made certain, if we could only meet with him, of seeing him hang from his own yard-arm. It was *Diis aliter visum*, as we used to say at Pocock's; and it was we threw *deuceace* too. Traitor, if you will, was Monsieur John Paul Jones, afterwards knight of his Most Christian Majesty's Order of Merit; but a braver traitor never wore sword.

We had been sent for in order to protect a fleet of merchantmen that were bound to the Baltic, and were to sail under the convoy of our ship and the "Countess of Scarborough," commanded by Captain

Piercy. And thus it came about that after being twenty-five days in his Majesty's service, I had the fortune to be present at one of the most severe and desperate combats that has been fought in our or any time.

I shall not attempt to tell that story of the battle of the 23rd September, which ended in our glorious Captain striking his own colours to our superior and irresistible enemy. Sir Richard has told the story of his disaster in words nobler than any I could supply, who, though indeed engaged in that fearful action in which our flag went down before a renegade Briton and his motley crew, saw but a very small portion of the battle which ended so fatally for us. It did not commence till nightfall. How well I remember the sound of the enemy's gun of which the shot crashed into our side in reply to the challenge of our captain who hailed her! Then came a broadside from us—the first I had ever heard in battle.

* * * * *

# NOTES ON DENIS DUVAL.

THE readers of the *Cornhill Magazine* have now read the last line written by William Makepeace Thackeray. The story breaks off as his life ended—full of vigour, and blooming with new promise like the apple-trees in this month of May: * the only difference between the work and the life is this, that the last chapters of the one have their little pathetical gaps and breaks of unfinished effort, the last chapters of the other were fulfilled and complete. But the life may be left alone; while as for the gaps and breaks in his last pages, nothing that we can write is likely to add to their significance. There they are; and the reader's mind has already fallen into them, with sensations not to be improved by the ordinary commentator. If Mr. Thackeray himself could do it, that would be another thing. Preacher he called himself in some of the Roundabout discourses in which his softer spirit is always to be heard, but he never had a text after his own mind so much as these last broken chapters would give him *now*. There is the date of a certain Friday to be filled in, and Time is no more. Is it *very* presumptuous to imagine the Roundabout that Mr. Thackeray would write upon this unfinished work of his, if he could come back to do it? We do not think it is, or very difficult either. What Carlyle calls the divine gift of speech was so largely his, especially in his maturer years, that he made clear in what he *did* say pretty much what he *would* say about anything that engaged his thought; and we have only to imagine a discourse "On the Two Women at the Mill," † to read off upon our minds the sense of what Mr. Thackeray alone could have found language for.

Vain are these speculations—or are they vain? Not if we try to think what he would think of his broken labours, considering that one

* The last number of "Denis Duval" appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* of June, 1864.

† "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken and the other left."

of these days our labours must be broken too. Still, there is not much to be said about it: and we pass on to the real business in hand, which is to show as well as we may what "Denis Duval" would have been had its author lived to complete his work. Fragmentary as it is, the story must always be of considerable importance, because it will stand as a warning to imperfect critics never to be in haste to cry of any intellect, "His vein is worked out: there is nothing left in him but the echoes of emptiness." The decriers were never of any importance, yet there is more than satisfaction, there is something like triumph in the mind of every honest man of letters when he sees, and knows everybody must see, how a genius which was sometimes said to have been guilty of passing behind a cloud toward the evening of his day, came out to shine with new splendour before the day was done. "Denis Duval" is unfinished, but it ends *that* question. The fiery genius that blazed over the city in "Vanity Fair," and passed on to a ripe afternoon in "Esmond," is not a whit less great, it is only broader, more soft, more mellow and kindly, as it sinks too suddenly in "Denis Duval."

This is said to introduce the settlement of another too-hasty notion which we believe to have been pretty generally accepted: namely, that Mr. Thackeray took little pains in the construction of his works. The truth is, that he very industriously *did* take pains. We find that out when we inquire, for the benefit of the readers of his Magazine, whether there is anything to tell of his designs for "Denis Duval." The answer comes in the form of many most careful notes, and memoranda of inquiry into minute matters of detail to make the story *true*. How many young novelists are there who *haven't* much genius to fall back upon, who yet, if they desired to set their hero down in Winchelsea a hundred years ago for instance, would take the trouble to learn how the town was built, and what gate led to Rye (if the hero happened to have any dealings with that place), and who were its local magnates, and how it was governed? And yet this is what Mr. Thackeray did, though his investigation added not twenty lines to the story and no "interest" whatever: it was simply so much conscientious effort to keep as near truth in feigning as he could. That Winchelsea had three gates, "Newgate on S.W., Landgate on N.E., Strandgate (*leading to Rye*) on S.E.;" that "the government was vested in a mayor and twelve jurats, jointly;" that "it sends canopy bearers on occasion of a coronation," &c. &c. &c., all is duly entered

in a note-book with reference to authorities. And so about the refugees at Rye, and the French Reformed church there; nothing is written that history cannot vouch for. The neat and orderly way in which the notes are set down is also remarkable. Each has its heading, as thus:

"*Refugees at Rye.*—At Rye is a small settlement of French refugees, who are for the most part fishermen, and have a minister of their own.

"*French Reformed Church.*—Wherever there is a sufficient number of faithful there is a church. The pastor is admitted to his office by the provincial synod, or the colloquy, provided it be composed of seven pastors at least. Pastors are seconded in their duties by laymen, who take the title of Ancients, Elders, and Deacons precentors. The union of Pastors, Deacons, and Elders forms a consistory."

Of course there is no considerable merit in care like this, but it is a merit which the author of "Denis Duval" is not popularly credited with, and therefore it may as well be set down to him. Besides, it may serve as an example to fledgeling geniuses of what *he* thought necessary to the perfection of his work.

But the chief interest of these notes and memoranda lies in the outlook they give us upon the conduct of the story. It is not desirable to print them all; indeed, to do so would be to copy a long list of mere references to books, magazines, and journals, where such byway bits of illustration are to be found as lit Mr. Thackeray's mind to so vivid an insight into manners and character. Still, we are anxious to give the reader as complete an idea of the story as we can.

First, here is a characteristic letter, in which Mr. Thackeray sketches his plot for the information of his publisher:—

"MY DEAR S——

"I WAS born in the year 1764, at Winchelsea, where my father was a grocer and clerk of the church. Everybody in the place was a good deal connected with smuggling.

"There used to come to our house a very noble French gentleman, called the COUNT DE LA MOTTE, and with him a German, the BARON DE LÜTTERLOH. My father used to take packages to Ostend and Calais for these two gentlemen, and perhaps I went to Paris once and saw the French queen.

"The squire of our town was SQUIRE WESTON of the Priory, who, with his brother, kept one of the genteelest houses in the country. He was churchwarden of our church, and much respected. Yes, but if you read the *Annual Register* of 1781, you will find that on the 13th July the sheriffs attended at the TOWER OF LONDON to receive custody of a De la Motte, a prisoner charged with high treason. The fact is, this Alsatian nobleman being in difficulties in his own country (where he had commanded the Regiment Soubise), came to London, and under pretence of sending prints to France and Ostend, supplied the French

Ministers with accounts of the movements of the English fleets and troops. go-between was Lütterloh, a Brunswicker, who had been a crimping-agent, th servant, who was a spy of France and Mr. Franklin, and who turned king's evid on La Motte, and hanged him.

"This Lütterloh, who had been a crimping-agent for German troops during American war, then a servant in London during the Gordon riots, then an a for a spy, then a spy over a spy, I suspect to have been a consummate scoun and doubly odious from speaking English with a German accent.

"What if he wanted to marry THAT CHARMING GIRL, who lived with Weston at Winchelsea? Ha! I see a mystery here.

"What if this scoundrel, going to receive his pay from the English Adm with whom he was in communication at Portsmouth, happened to go on b the 'Royal George' the day she went down?

"As for George and Joseph Weston, of the Priory, I am sorry to say they v rascals too. They were tried for robbing the Bristol mail in 1780; and b acquitted for want of evidence, were tried immediately after on another indictn for forgery—Joseph was acquitted, but George was capitally convicted. But did not help poor Joseph. Before their trials, they and some others broke ou Newgate, and Joseph fired at, and wounded, a porter who tried to stop him Snow Hill. For this he was tried and found guilty on the Black Act, and h along with his brother.

"Now, if I was an innocent participator in De la Motte's treasons, and Westons' forgeries and robberies, what pretty scrapes I must have been in?

"I married the young woman, whom the brutal Lütterloh would have h himself, and lived happy ever after."

Here, it will be seen, the general idea is very roughly sket and the sketch was not in all its parts carried out. Another never sent to its destination, gives a somewhat later acco Denis,—

"My grandfather's name was Duval; he was a barber and perruquier b and elder of the French Protestant Church at Winchelsea. I was sent with his correspondent, a Methodist grocer, at Rye.

"These two kept a fishing-boat, but the fish they caught was many an barrel of Nantz brandy, which we landed—never mind where—at a pl well known. In the innocence of my heart, I—a child—got leave to go o We used to go out at night and meet ships from the French coast.

"I learned to scuttle a marlinspike,
reef a lee-scupper,
keelhaul a bowsprit

as well as the best of them. How well I remember the jabbering of t men the first night as they handed the kegs over to us! One night w into by his Majesty's revenue cutter 'Lynx.' I asked what those fizzing in the water, &c.

"I wouldn't go on with the smuggling; being converted by Mr. came to preach to us at Rye—but that is neither here nor there. . .

In these letters neither "my mother," nor the Count de Saverne and his unhappy wife appear; while Agnes exists only as "that charming girl." Count de la Motte, the Baron de Lütterloh, and the Westons, seem to have figured foremost in the author's mind: they are historical characters. In the first letter, we are referred to the *Annual Register* for the story of De la Motte and Lütterloh: and this is what we read there,—

"*January* 5, 1781.—A gentleman was taken into custody for treasonable practices, named Henry Francis de la Motte, which he bore with the title of baron annexed to it. He has resided in Bond Street, at a Mr. Otley's, a woollen draper, for some time.

"When he was going upstairs at the Secretary of State's office, in Cleveland Row, he dropped several papers on the staircase, which were immediately discovered by the messenger, and carried in with him to Lord Hillsborough. After his examination, he was committed a close prisoner for high treason to the Tower. The papers taken from him are reported to be of the highest importance. Among them are particular lists of every ship of force in any of our yards and docks, &c. &c.

"In consequence of the above papers being found, Henry Lütterloh, Esq., of Wickham, near Portsmouth, was afterwards apprehended and brought to town. The messengers found Mr. Lütterloh ready booted to go a hunting. When he understood their business, he did not discover the least embarrassment, but delivered his keys with the utmost readiness. . . . . Mr. Lütterloh is a German, and had lately taken a house at Wickham, within a few miles of Portsmouth; and as he kept a pack of hounds, and was considered as a good companion, he was well received by the gentlemen in the neighbourhood.

"*July* 14, 1781.—Mr. Lütterloh's testimony was of so serious a nature, that the court seemed in a state of astonishment during the whole of his long examination. He said that he embarked in a plot with the prisoner in the year 1778, to furnish the French court with secret intelligence of the Navy; for which, at first, he received only eight guineas a month; the importance of his information appeared, however, so clear to the prisoner, that he shortly after allowed him fifty guineas a month, besides many valuable gifts; that, upon any emergency, he came post to town to M. de la Motte, but common occurrences relative to their treaty, he sent by the post. He identified the papers found in his garden, and the seals, he said, were M. de la Motte's, and well known in France. He had been to Paris by direction of the prisoner, and was closeted with Monsieur Sartine, the French Minister. He had formed a plan for capturing Governor Johnstone's squadron, for which he demanded 8,000 guineas, and a third share of the ships, to be divided amongst the prisoner, himself, and his friend in a certain office, but the French court would not agree to yielding more than an eighth share of the squadron. After agreeing to enable the French to take the commodore, he went to Sir Hugh Palliser, and offered a plan to take the French, and to defeat his original project with which he had furnished the French court.

"The trial lasted for thirteen hours, when the jury, after a short deliberation, pronounced the prisoner guilty, when sentence was immediately passed upon him;

the prisoner received the awful doom (he was condemned to be hanged, drawn, a quartered), with great composure, but inveighed against Mr. Lütterloh in wa terms. . . . . His behaviour throughout the whole of this trying scene ex bited a combination of manliness, steadiness, and presence of mind. He appear at the same time polite, condescending, and unaffected, and, we presume, cou never have stood so firm and collected at so awful a moment, if, when he felt hi self fully convicted as a traitor to the State which gave him protection, he had nc however mistakenly, felt a conscious innocence within his own breast that he h devoted his life to the service of his country.

* * * * *

"M. de la Motte was about five feet ten inches in height, fifty years of age, a of a comely countenance; his deportment was exceedingly genteel, and his e was expressive of strong penetration. He wore a white cloth coat, and a lin waistcoat worked in tambour."—*Annual Register*, vol. xxiv. p. 184.

It is not improbable that from this narrative of a trial for hig treason in 1781 the whole story radiated. These are the very me whom we have seen in Thackeray's pages; and it is a fine test of h insight and power to compare them as they lie embalmed in th *Annual Register*, and as they breathe again in "Denis Duval." Th part they were to have played in the story is already intelligible, a but the way in which they were to have confused the lives of Den and his love. "'At least, Duval,' De la Motte said to me when shook hands with him and with all my heart forgave him, 'mad an reckless as I have been and fatal to all whom I loved, I have nev allowed the child to want, and have supported her in comfort when myself was almost without a meal.'" What was the injury whic Denis forgave with all his heart? Fatal to all whom he loved, ther are evidences that De la Motte was to have urged Lütterloh's pretensions to Agnes: whose story at this period we find inscribed i the note-book in one word—"Henriette Iphigenia." For Agnes wa christened Henriette originally, and Denis was called Blaise.*

* Among the notes there is a little chronological table of events as they occur—

"Blaise, born 1763.
Henriette de Barr was born in 1766–7.
Her father went to Corsica, '68.
Mother fled, '68.
Father killed at B., '69.
Mother died, '70.
Blaise turned out, '79.
Henriette Ἰφιγενία, '81.
La Motte's catastrophe, '82.
Rodney's action, '82."

As for M. Lütterloh, "that consummate scoundrel, and doubly odious from speaking English with a German accent"—having hanged De la Motte, while confessing that he had made a solemn engagement with him never to betray each other, and then immediately laying a wager that De la Motte *would* be hanged, having broken open a secretaire, and distinguished himself in various other ways—he seems to have gone to Winchelsea, where it was easy for him to threaten or cajole the Westons into trying to force Agnes into his arms. She was living with these people, and we know how they discountenanced her faithful affection for Denis. Overwrought by the importunities of Lütterloh and the Westons, she escaped to Dr. Barnard for protection; and soon unexpected help arrived. The De Viomesnils, her mother's relations, became suddenly convinced of the innocence of the Countess. Perhaps (and when we say perhaps, we repeat such hints of his plans as Mr. Thackeray uttered in conversation at his fireside) they knew of certain heritages to which Agnes would be entitled were her mother absolved: at any rate, they had reasons of their own for claiming her at this opportune moment—as they did. Agnes takes Dr. Barnard's advice and goes off to these prosperous relations, who, having neglected her so long, desire her so much. Perhaps Denis was thinking of the sad hour when he came home, long years afterward, to find his sweetheart gone, when he wrote:—"O Agnes, Agnes! how the years roll away! What strange events have befallen us; what passionate griefs have we had to suffer: what a merciful heaven has protected us, since that day when your father knelt over the little cot, in which his child lay sleeping!"

At the time she goes home to France, Denis is far away fighting on board the "Arethusa," under his old captain, Sir Richard Pearson, who commanded the "Serapis" in the action with Paul Jones. Denis was wounded early in this fight, in which Pearson had to strike his own colours, almost every man on board being killed or hurt. Of Pearson's career, which Denis must have followed in after days, there is more than one memorandum in Mr. Thackeray's note-book:—

"'Serapis,' R. Pearson. *Beatson's Memoirs.*
"*Gentleman's Magazine*, 49, pp. 484. Account of action with Paul Jones, 1779.
"*Gentleman's Magazine*, 502, pp. 84. Pearson knighted, 1780.
"Commanded the 'Arethusa' off Ushant, 1781, in Kempenfeldt's action. 'Field of Mars,' art. Ushant."

And then follows the question,—

"*Qy.* How did Pearson get away from Paul Jones?"

But before that is answered we will quote the "story of the disaster" as Sir Richard tells it, "in words nobler than any I could supply:" and, indeed, Mr. Thackeray seems to have thought much of the letter to the Admiralty Office, and to have found Pearson's character in it.

After some preliminary fighting—

"We dropt alongside of each other, head and stern, when the fluke of our spare anchor hooking his quarter, we became so close, fore and aft, that the muzzles of our guns touched each other's sides. In this position we engaged from half-past eight till half-past ten; during which time, from the great quantity and variety of combustible matter which they threw in upon our decks, chains, and, in short, every part of the ship, we were on fire no less than ten or twelve times in different parts of the ship, and it was with the greatest difficulty and exertion imaginable at times, that we were able to get it extinguished. At the same time the largest of the two frigates kept sailing round us the whole action and raking us fore and aft, by which means she killed or wounded almost every man on the quarter and main decks.

"About half-past nine, a cartridge of powder was set on fire, which, running from cartridge to cartridge all the way aft, blew up the whole of the people and officers that were quartered abaft the mainmast. . . . . At ten o'clock they called for quarter from the ship alongside; hearing this, I called for the boarders and ordered them to board her, which they did; but the moment they were on board her, they discovered a superior number laying under cover with pikes in their hands ready to receive them; our people retreated instantly into our own ship, and returned to their guns till past ten, when the frigate coming across our stern and pouring her broadside into us again, without our being able to bring a gun to bear on her, I found it in vain, and, in short, impracticable, from the situation we were in, to stand out any longer with the least prospect of success. I therefore struck. Our mainmast at the same time went by the board. . . .

"I am extremely sorry for the misfortune that has happened—that of losing his Majesty's ship I had the honour to command; but at the same time, I flatter myself with the hopes that their lordships will be convinced that she has not been given away, but that on the contrary every exertion has been used to defend her."

The "Serapis" and the "Countess of Scarborough," after drifting about in the North Sea, were brought into the Texel by Paul Jones; when Sir Joseph Yorke, our ambassador at the Hague, memorialized their High Mightinesses the States-General of the Low Countries, requesting that these prizes might be given up. Their High Mightinesses refused to interfere.

Of course the fate of the "Serapis" was Denis's fate; and the question also is, how did *he* get away from Paul Jones? A note written immediately after the query suggests a hair-breadth escape for him after a double imprisonment.

"Some sailors are lately arrived from Amsterdam on board the 'Lætitia,' Captain March. They were taken out of the hold of a Dutch East Indiaman by the captain of the 'Kingston' privateer, who, having lost some of his people, gained some information of their fate from a music-girl, and had spirit enough to board the ship and search her. The poor wretches were all chained down in the hold, and but for this would have been carried to perpetual slavery."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 50, pp. 101.

Do we see how truth and fiction were to have been married here? Suppose that Denis Duval, escaping from one imprisonment in Holland, fell into the snares of Dutch East Indiamen, or was kidnapped with the men of the "Kingston" privateer? Denis chained down in the hold, thinking one moment of Agnes and the garden wall, which alone was too much to separate them, and at the next moment of how he was now to be carried to perpetual slavery, beyond hope. And then the music-girl; and the cheer of the "Kingston's" men as they burst into the hold and set the prisoners free. It is easy to imagine what those chapters would have been like.

At liberty, Denis was still kept at sea, where he did not rise to the heroic in a day, but progressed through all the commonplace duties of a young seaman's life, which we find noted down accordingly:—

"He must serve two years on board before he can be rated midshipman. Such volunteers are mostly put under the care of the gunner, who caters for them; and are permitted to walk the quarter-deck and wear the uniform from the beginning. When fifteen and rated midshipmen, they form a mess with the mates. When examined for their commissions they are expected to know everything relative to navigation and seamanship, are strictly examined in the different sailings, working tides, days' works, and double-altitudes—and are expected to give some account of the different methods of finding the longitudes by a time-keeper and the lunar observations. In practical seamanship they must show how to conduct a ship from one place to another under every disadvantage of wind, tide, &c. After this, the candidate obtains a certificate from the captain, and his commission when he can get it."

Another note describes a personage whose acquaintance we have missed:—

"A seaman of the old school, whose hand was more familiar with the tar-brush than with Hadley's quadrant, who had peeped into the mysteries of navigation as laid down by J. Hamilton Moore, and who acquired an idea of the rattletraps and rigging of a ship through the famous illustrations which adorn the pages of Darcy Lever."

Denis was a seaman in stirring times. "The year of which we treat," says the *Annual Register* for 1779, "presented the most awful

appearance of public affairs which perhaps this country had beheld for many ages;" and Duval had part in more than one of the startling events which succeeded each other so rapidly in the wars with France and America and Spain. He was destined to come into contact with Major André, whose fate excited extraordinary sympathy at the time: Washington is said to have shed tears when he signed his death-warrant. It was on the 2nd of October, 1780, that this young officer was executed. A year later, and Denis was to witness the trial and execution of one whom he knew better and was more deeply interested in, De la Motte. The courage and nobleness with which he met his fate moved the sympathy of Duval, whom he had injured, as well as of most of those who saw him die. Denis has written concerning him:—"Except my kind namesake, the captain and admiral, this was the first *gentleman* I ever met in intimacy, a gentleman with many a stain,—nay, crime to reproach him, but not all lost, I hope and pray. I own to having a kindly feeling towards that fatal man."

Lütterloh's time had not yet come; but besides that we find him disposed of with the "Royal George" in the first-quoted letter, an entry in the note-book unites the fate of the bad man with that of the good ship.*

Meanwhile, the memorandum "Rodney's action, 1782," indicates that Duval was to take part in our victory over the French fleet commanded by the Count de Grasse, who was himself captured with the "Ville de Paris" and four other ships. "De Grasse with his suite landed on Southsea Common, Portsmouth. They were conducted in carriages to the 'George,' where a most sumptuous dinner had been procured for the Count and his suite, by Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Parkes, who entertained him and his officers at his own expense." Here also was something for Denis to see; and in this same autumn came on the trial of the two Westons, when Denis was to be the means—unconsciously—of bringing his old enemy, Joseph Weston, to punishment. There are two notes to this effect.

"1782-3. Jo. Weston, always savage against Blaise, fires on him in Cheapside.

"*The Black Act* is 9 George II. c. 22. The preamble says:—'Whereas several ill-designing and disorderly persons have associated themselves under the name of Blacks, and entered into confederacies to support and assist one another

* Contemporary accounts of the foundering of the "Royal George" represent her crowded with people from the shore. We have seen how Lütterloh was among these, having come on board to receive the price of his treason.

in stealing and destroying deer, robbing warrens and fish-ponds' . . . . It then goes on to enact that 'if any person or persons shall wilfully or maliciously shoot at any person in any dwelling-house or other place, he shall suffer death as in cases of felony without benefit of the clergy.' "

A Joseph Weston was actually found guilty under the Black Act, of firing at and wounding a man on Snow Hill, and was hanged with his brother. Mr. Thackeray's note-book refers him to "The Westons in 'Session Papers,' 1782, pp. 463, 470, 473," to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1782, to "Genuine Memoirs of George and Joseph Weston, 1782," and *Notes and Queries*, Series I. vol. x.*

The next notes (in order of time) concern a certain very disinterested action of Duval's :—

"*Deal Riots*, 1783.

"DEAL.—Here has been a great scene of confusion, by a party of Colonel Douglas's Light Dragoons, sixty in number, who entered the town in the dead of the night in aid to the excise officers, in order to break open the stores and make seizures : but the smugglers, who are never unprepared, having taken the alarm, mustered together, and a most desperate battle ensued."

Now old Duval, the perruquier, as we know, belonged to the great Mackerel party, or smuggling conspiracy, which extended all along the coast ; and frequent allusion has been made to his secret stores, and to the profits of his so-called *fishing* expeditions. Remembering what has been written of this gentleman, we can easily imagine the falsehoods, tears, lying asseverations of poverty and innocence which old Duval must have uttered on the terrible night when the excise officers visited him. But his exclamations were to no purpose, for it is a fact that when Denis saw what was going on, he burst out with the truth, and though he knew it was his own inheritance he was giving up, he led the officers right away to the hoards they were seeking.

His conduct on this occasion Denis has already referred to where he says :—"There were matters connected with this story regarding which I *could* not speak. . . . Now they are secrets no more.

* These notes also appear in the same connection :—

"*Horse-Stealers.* One Saunders was committed to Oxford gaol for horse-stealing, who appears to have belonged to a gang, part of whom stole horses in the north counties, and the other part in the south, and about the midland counties they used to meet and exchange.—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 39, 165.

"1783. *Capital Convictions.*—At the Spring Assizes, 1783, 119 prisoners received sentence of Death."

That old society of smugglers is dissolved long ago: nay, I shall have to tell presently how I helped myself to break it up." And therewith all old Duval's earnings, all Denis's fortune that was to be, vanished; but of course Denis prospered in his profession, and had no need of unlawful gains.*

But very sad times intervened between Denis and prosperity. He was to be taken prisoner by the French, and to fret many long years away in one of their arsenals. At last the Revolution broke out, and he may have been given up, or—thanks to his foreign tongue and extraction—found means to escape. Perhaps he went in search of Agnes, whom we know he never forgot, and whose great relations were now in trouble; for the Revolution which freed him was terrible to "aristocrats."

This is nearly all the record we have of this part of Denis's life, and of the life which Agnes led while she was away from him. But perhaps it was at this time that Duval saw Marie Antoinette; † perhaps he found Agnes, and helped to get her away: or had Agnes already escaped to England, and was it in the old familiar haunts—Farmer Perreau's *Columbarium*, where the pigeons were that Agnes loved; the Rectory garden basking in the autumn evening; the old wall and the pear-tree behind it; the plain from whence they could see the French lights across the Channel; the little twinkling window in a gable of the Priory-house, where the light used to be popped out at nine o'clock—that Denis and Agnes first met after their long separation?

However that may have been, we come presently upon a note of "a tailor contracts to supply three superfine suits for 11*l.* 11*s.* (*Gazetteer* and *Daily Advertiser*);" and also of a villa at Beckenham, with "four

* Notices of Sussex smuggling (says the note-book) are to be found in vol. x. of "Sussex Archæological Collections," 69, 94. Reference is also made to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. viii. pp. 292, 172.

† The following memoranda appear in the note-book:—

"Marie Antoinette was born on the 2nd November, 1755, and her saint's day is the FÊTE DES MORTS.

"In the Corsican expedition the Légion de Lorraine was under the Baron de Viomesnil. He emigrated at the commencement of the Revolution, took an active part in the army of Condé, and in the emigration, returned with Louis XVIII., followed him to Gand, and was made marshal and peer of France after '15.

"Another Vi. went with Rochambeau to America in 1780."

parlours, eight bed-rooms, stables, two acres of garden, and fourteen acres of meadow, let for 70*l.* a year," which may have been the house the young people first lived in after they were married. Later, they moved to Fareport, where, as we read, the admiral is weighed along with his own pig. But he cannot have given up the service for many years after his marriage, for he writes:—"T'other day when we took over the King of France to Calais (H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence being in command), I must needs have a postchaise from Dover to look at that old window in the Priory-house at Winchelsea. I went through the old wars, despairs, tragedies. I sighed as vehemently after forty years as though the *infandi dolores* were fresh upon me, as though I were the schoolboy trudging back to his task, and taking a last look at his dearest joy."

"And who, pray, was Agnes?" he writes elsewhere. "To-day her name is Agnes Duval, and she sits at her work-table hard by. The lot of my life has been changed by knowing her—to win such a prize in life's lottery has been given but to very few. What I have done—of any worth—has been done by trying to deserve her." . . . "*Monsieur mon fils*,"—(this is to his boy)—"if ever you marry, and have a son, I hope the little chap will have an honest man for a grandfather, and that you will be able to say, 'I loved him,' when the daisies cover me." Once more of Agnes he writes:—"When my ink is run out, and my little tale is written, and yonder church that is ringing to seven-o'clock prayers shall toll for a certain D. D., you will please, good neighbours, to remember that I never loved any but yonder lady, and keep a place by Darby for Joan when her turn shall arrive."

# LOVEL THE WIDOWER

# OVEL THE WIDOWER.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE BACHELOR OF BEAK STREET.

HO shall be the hero of this tale? Not I who write it. I am but the Chorus of the Play. I make remarks on the conduct of the characters: I narrate their simple story. There is love and marriage in it: there is grief and disappointment: the scene is in the parlour, and the region beneath the parlour. No: it may be the parlour and kitchen, in this instance, are on the same level. There is no high life, unless, to be sure, you call a baronet's widow a lady in high life; and some ladies may be, while some certainly are not. I don't think there's a villain in the whole performance. There is an able selfish old woman, certainly; an old highway robber; sponger on other people's kindness; an old haunter of Bath Cheltenham boarding-houses (about which how can I know g, never having been in a boarding-house at Bath or Chelin my life?); an old swindler of tradesmen, tyrant of

servants, bully of the poor—who, to be sure, might do duty for a villain, but she considers herself as virtuous a woman as ever was born. The heroine is not faultless (ah! that will be a great relief to some folks, for many writers' good women are, you know, so *very* insipid). The principal personage you may very likely think to be no better than a muff. But is many a respectable man of our acquaintance much better? and do muffs know that they are what they are, or, knowing it, are they unhappy? Do girls decline to marry one if he is rich? Do we refuse to dine with one? I listened to one at Church last Sunday, with all the women crying and sobbing; and, oh, dear me! how finely he preached! Don't we give him great credit for wisdom and eloquence in the House of Commons? Don't we give him important commands in the army? Can you, or can you not, point out one who has been made a peer? Doesn't your wife call one in the moment any of the children are ill? Don't we read his dear poems, or even novels? Yes; perhaps even this one is read and written by—Well? *Quid rides?* Do you mean that I am painting a portrait which hangs before me every morning in the looking-glass when I am shaving? *Après?* Do you suppose that I suppose that I have not infirmities like my neighbours? Am I weak? It is notorious to all my friends there is a certain dish I can't resist: no, not if I have already eaten twice too much at dinner. So, dear sir, or madam, have *you* your weakness—*your* irresistible dish of temptation? (or if you don't know it, your friends do). No, dear friend, the chances are that you and I are not people of the highest intellect, of the largest fortune, of the most ancient family, of the most consummate virtue, of the most faultless beauty in face and figure. We are no heroes nor angels; neither are we fiends from abodes unmentionable, black assassins, treacherous Iagos, familiar with stabbing and poison—murder our amusement, daggers our playthings, arsenic our daily bread, lies our conversation, and forgery our common handwriting. No, we are not monsters of crime, or angels walking the earth—at least I know *one* of us who isn't, as can be shown any day at home if the knife won't cut or the mutton comes up raw. But we are not altogether brutal and unkind, and a few folks like us. Our poetry is not as good as Alfred Tennyson's, but we can turn a couplet for Miss Fanny's album: our jokes are not always first-rate, but Mary and her mother smile very kindly when papa tells his story or makes his pun. We have many weaknesses,

but we are not ruffians of crime. No more was my friend Lovel. On the contrary, he was as harmless and kindly a fellow as ever lived when I first knew him. At present, with his changed position, he is, perhaps, rather *fine* (and certainly I am not asked to his *best* dinner-parties as I used to be, where you hardly see a commoner—but stay! I am advancing matters). At the time when this story begins, I say, Lovel had his faults—which of us has not? He had buried his wife, having notoriously been henpecked by her. How many men and brethren are like him! He had a good fortune—I wish I had as much—though I dare say many people are ten times as rich. He was a good-looking fellow enough; though that depends, ladies, upon whether you like a fair man or a dark one. He had a country house, but it was only at Putney. In fact, he was in business in the city, and being a hospitable man, and having three or four spare bedrooms, some of his friends were always welcome at Shrublands, especially after Mrs. Lovel's death, who liked me pretty well at the period of her early marriage with my friend, but got to dislike me at last and to show me the cold shoulder. That is a joint I never could like (though I have known fellows who persist in dining off it year after year, who cling hold of it, and refuse to be separated from it). I say, when Lovel's wife began to show me that she was tired of my company, I made myself scarce: used to pretend to be engaged when Fred faintly asked me to Shrublands; to accept his meek apologies, proposals to dine *en garçon* at Greenwich, the club, and so forth; and never visit upon him my wrath at his wife's indifference—for, after all, he had been my friend at many a pinch: he never stinted at "Harts's" or "Lovegrove's," and always made a point of having the wine I liked, never mind what the price was. As for his wife, there was, assuredly, no love lost between us—I thought her a lean, scraggy, lackadaisical, egotistical, consequential, insipid creature: and as for his mother-in-law, who stayed at Fred's as long and as often as her daughter would endure her, has any one who ever knew that notorious old Lady Baker at Bath, at Cheltenham, at Brighton,—wherever trumps and frumps were found together; wherever scandal was cackled; wherever fly-blown reputations were assembled, and dowagers with damaged titles trod over each other for the pas;—who, I say, ever had a good word for that old woman? What party was not bored where she appeared? What tradesman was not done with whom she dealt? I wish with all my heart I was

about to narrate a story with a good mother-in-law for a character; but then you know, my dear madam, all good women in novels are insipid. This woman certainly was not. She was not only not insipid, but exceedingly bad-tasted. She had a foul, loud tongue, a stupid head, a bad temper, an immense pride and arrogance, an extravagant son, and very little money. Can I say much more of a woman than this? Aha! my good Lady Baker! I was a *mauvais sujet*, was I?—I was leading Fred into smoking, drinking, and low bachelor habits, was I? I, his old friend, who have borrowed money from him any time these twenty years, was not fit company for you and your precious daughter? Indeed! *I* paid the money I borrowed from him like a man; but did *you* ever pay him, I should like to know? When Mrs. Lovel was in the first column of *The Times*, *then* Fred and I used to go off to Greenwich and Blackwall, as I said; then his kind old heart was allowed to feel for his friend; *then* we could have the other bottle of claret without the appearance of Bedford and the coffee, which in Mrs. L.'s time used to be sent in to us before we could ring for a second bottle, although she and Lady Baker had had three glasses each out of the first. Three full glasses each, I give you my word! No, madam, it was your turn to bully me once—now it is mine and I use it. No, you old catamaran, though you pretend you never read novels, some of your confounded good-natured friends will let you know of *this* one. Here you are, do you hear? Here you shall be shown up. And so I intend to show up *other* women and *other* men who have offended me. Is one to be subject to slights and scorn, and not have revenge? Kindnesses are easily forgotten; but injuries!—what worthy man does not keep *those* in mind?

Before entering upon the present narrative, may I take leave to inform a candid public that, though it is all true, there is not a word of truth in it; that though Lovel is alive and prosperous, and you very likely have met him, yet I defy you to point him out; that his wife (for he is Lovel the Widower no more) is not the lady you imagine her to be, when you say (as you will persist in doing), "Oh, that character is intended for Mrs. Thingamy, or was notoriously drawn from Lady So-and-So." No. You are utterly mistaken. Why, even the advertising-puffers have almost given up that stale stratagem of announcing "REVELATIONS FROM HIGH LIFE.—The *beau monde* will be startled at recognizing the portraits of some of its brilliant leaders

in Miss Wiggins's forthcoming *roman de société.*" Or, "We suspect a certain ducal house will be puzzled to guess how the pitiless author of 'May Fair Mysteries' has become acquainted with (and exposed with a fearless hand) *certain family secrets* which were thought only to be known to a few of the very highest members of the aristocracy." No, I say; these silly baits to catch an unsuspecting public shall not be our arts. If you choose to occupy yourself with trying to ascertain if a certain cap fits one amongst ever so many thousand heads, you *may* possibly pop it on the right one: but the cap-maker will perish before he tells you; unless, of course, he has some private pique to avenge, or malice to wreak, upon some individual who can't by any possibility hit again;—*then*, indeed, he will come boldly forward and seize upon his victim—(a bishop, say, or a woman without coarse, quarrelsome male relatives, will be best)—and clap on him, or her, such a cap, with such ears, that all the world shall laugh at the poor wretch, shuddering, and blushing beet-root red, and whimpering deserved tears of rage and vexation at being made the common butt of society. Besides, I dine at Lovel's still; his company and cuisine are amongst the best in London. If they suspected I was taking them off, he and his wife would leave off inviting me. Would any man of a generous disposition lose such a valued friend for a joke, or be so foolish as to show him up in a story? All persons with a decent knowledge of the world will at once banish the thought, as not merely base, but absurd. I am invited to his house one day next week: *vous concevez* I can't mention the very day, for then he would find me out—and of course there would be no more cards for his old friend. He would not like appearing, as it must be owned he does in this memoir, as a man of not very strong mind. He believes himself to be a most determined, resolute person. He is quick in speech, wears a fierce beard, speaks with asperity to his servants (who liken him to a—to that beforenamed sable or ermine contrivance, in which ladies insert their hands in winter), and takes his wife to task so smartly, that I believe she believes he believes he is the master of the house. "Elizabeth, my love, he must mean A, or B, or D," I fancy I hear Lovel say; and she says, "Yes; oh! it is certainly D—his very image!" "D to a T," says Lovel (who is a neat wit). *She* may know that I mean to depict her husband in the above unpretending lines: but she will never let me know of her knowledge except by a little extra courtesy;

except (may I make this pleasing exception?) by a few more invi tions; except by a look of those unfathomable eyes (graci goodness! to think she wore spectacles ever so long, and put a over them as it were!), into which, when you gaze sometimes, y may gaze so deep, and deep, and deep, that I defy you to plumb h way down into their mystery.

When I was a young man, I had lodgings in Beak Street, Reg Street (I no more have lived in Beak Street than in Belgrave Squa but I choose to say so, and no gentleman will be so rude as to c tradict another)—I had lodgings, I say, in Beak Street, Reg Street. Mrs. Prior was the landlady's name. She had seen bet days—landladies frequently have. Her husband—he could not called the landlord, for Mrs. P. was manager of the place—had be in happier times, captain or lieutenant in the militia; then of D in Norfolk, of no profession; then of Norwich Castle, a prisoner debt; then of Southampton Buildings, London, law-writer; then the Bom-Retiro Caçadores, in the service of H.M. the Qu of Portugal, lieutenant and paymaster; then of Melina Pla St. George's Fields, &c.—I forbear to give the particulars of existence which a legal biographer has traced step by step, and wh has more than once been the subject of judicial investigation certain commissioners in Lincoln's-Inn Fields. Well, Prior, at t time, swimming out of a hundred shipwrecks, had clambered on a lighter, as it were, and was clerk to a coal-merchant, by the ri side. "You conceive, sir," he would say, "my employment is o temporary—the fortune of war, the fortune of war!" He smatte words in not a few foreign languages. His person was profus scented with tobacco. Bearded individuals, padding the muddy h in the neighbouring Regent Street, would call sometimes of an eveni and ask for "the captain." He was known at many neighbour billiard-tables, and, I imagine, not respected. You will not enough of Captain Prior to be very weary of him and his coa swagger, to be disgusted by his repeated requests for small mon loans, or to deplore his loss, which you will please to suppose happened before the curtain of our present drama draws up. I thi two people in the world were sorry for him: his wife, who still lov the memory of the handsome young man who had wooed and w her; his daughter Elizabeth, whom for the last few months of l life, and up to his fatal illness, he every evening conducted to wh

he called her "academy." You are right. Elizabeth is the principal character in this story. When I knew her, a thin, freckled girl of fifteen, with a lean frock, and hair of a reddish hue, she used to borrow my books, and play on the First Floor's piano, when he was from home—Slumley his name was. He was editor of the *Swell*, a newspaper then published; author of a great number of popular songs, a friend of several music-selling houses; and it was by Mr. Slumley's interest that Elizabeth was received as a pupil at what the family called "the academy."

Captain Prior then used to conduct his girl to the Academy, but she often had to conduct him home again. Having to wait about the premises for two, or three, or five hours sometimes, whilst Elizabeth was doing her lessons, he would naturally desire to shelter himself from the cold at some neighbouring house of entertainment. Every Friday, a prize of a golden medal, nay, I believe sometimes of twenty-five silver medals, was awarded to Miss Bellenden and other young ladies for their good conduct and assiduity at this academy. Miss Bellenden gave her gold medal to her mother, only keeping five shillings for herself, with which the poor child bought gloves, shoes, and her humble articles of millinery.

Once or twice the Captain succeeded in intercepting that piece of gold, and I dare say treated some of his whiskered friends, the clinking trampers of the Quadrant pavement. He was a free-handed fellow when he had anybody's money in his pocket. It was owing to differences regarding the settlement of accounts that he quarrelled with the coal-merchant, his very last employer. Bessy, after yielding once or twice to his importunity, and trying to believe his solemn promises of repayment, had strength of mind to refuse her father the pound which he would have taken. Her five shillings—her poor little slender pocket-money, the representative of her charities and kindnesses to the little brothers and sisters, of her little toilette ornaments, nay necessities; of those well-mended gloves, of those oft-darned stockings, of those poor boots, which had to walk many a weary mile after midnight; of those little knicknacks, in the shape of brooch or bracelet, with which the poor child adorned her homely robe or sleeve—her poor five shillings, out of which Mary sometimes found a pair of shoes, or Tommy a flannel-jacket, and little Bill a coach and horse—this wretched sum, this mite, which Bessy administered among so many poor—I very much fear her father sometimes confiscated.

I charged the child with the fact, and she could not deny me. I vowed a tremendous vow, that if ever I heard of her giving Prior money again, I would quit the lodgings, and never give those children lollipop, nor pegtop, nor sixpence; nor the pungent marmalade, nor the biting gingerbread-nut, nor the theatre-characters, nor the paint-box to illuminate the same; nor the discarded clothes, which became smaller clothes upon the persons of little Tommy and little Bill, for whom Mrs. Prior, and Bessy, and the little maid, cut, clipped, altered, ironed, darned, mangled, with the greatest ingenuity. I say, considering what had passed between me and the Priors—considering those money transactions, and those clothes, and my kindness to the children—it was rather hard that my jam-pots were poached, and my brandy-bottles leaked. And then to frighten her brother with the story of the inexorable creditor—oh, Mrs. Prior!—oh, fie, Mrs. P.!

So Bessy went to her school in a shabby shawl, a faded bonnet, and a poor little lean dress flounced with the mud and dust of all weathers, whereas there were some other young ladies, fellow-pupils of her, who laid out their gold medals to much greater advantage. Miss Delamere, with her eighteen shillings a week (calling them "*silver medals*" was only my wit, you see), had twenty new bonnets, silk and satin dresses for all seasons, feathers in abundance, swansdown muffs and tippets, lovely pocket-handkerchiefs and trinkets, and many and many a half-crown mould of jelly, bottle of sherry, blanket, or what not, for a poor fellow-pupil in distress; and as for Miss Montanville, who had exactly the same sal—well, who had a scholarship of exactly the same value, viz. about fifty pounds yearly—she kept an elegant little cottage in the Regent's Park, a brougham with a horse all over brass harness, and a groom with a prodigious gold lace hat-band, who was treated with frightful contumely at the neighbouring cabstand; an aunt or a mother, I don't know which (I hope it was only an aunt), always comfortably dressed, and who looked after Montanville: and she herself had bracelets, brooches, and velvet pelisses of the very richest description. But then Miss Montanville was a good economist. *She* was never known to help a poor friend in distress, or give a fainting brother and sister a crust or a glass of wine. She allowed ten shillings a week to her father, whose name was Boskinson, said to be a clerk to a chapel in Paddington; but she would never see him —no, not when he was in hospital, where he was so ill; and though she certainly lent Miss Wilder thirteen pounds, she had

Wilder arrested upon her promissory note for twenty-four, and sold up every stick of Wilder's furniture, so that the whole academy cried shame! Well, an accident occurred to Miss Montanville, for which those may be sorry who choose. On the evening of the 26th of December, Eighteen hundred and something, when the conductors of the academy were giving their grand annual Christmas Pant—I should say examination of the academy pupils before their numerous friends — Montanville, who happened to be present, not in her brougham this time, but in an aërial chariot of splendour drawn by doves, fell off a rainbow, and through the roof of the Revolving Shrine of the Amaranthine Queen, thereby very nearly damaging Bellenden, who was occupying the shrine, attired in a light-blue spangled dress, waving a wand, and uttering some idiotic verses composed for her by the Professor of Literature attached to the academy. As for Montanville, let her go shrieking down that trap-door, break her leg, be taken home, and never more be character of ours. She never could speak. Her voice was as hoarse as a fishwoman's. Can that immense stout old box-keeper at the —— theatre, who limps up to ladies on the first tier, and offers that horrible footstool, which everybody stumbles over, and makes a clumsy curtsey, and looks so knowing and hard, as if she recognized an acquaintance in the splendid lady who enters the box—can that old female be the once brilliant Emily Montanville? I am told there are *no* lady box-keepers in the English theatres. This, I submit, is a proof of my consummate care and artifice in rescuing from a prurient curiosity the individual personages from whom the characters of the present story are taken. Montanville is *not* a box-opener. She *may*, under another name, keep a trinket-shop in the Burlington Arcade, for what you know: but this secret no torture shall induce me to divulge. Life has its rises and its downfalls, and you have had yours, you hobbling old creature. Montanville, indeed! Go thy ways! Here is a shilling for thee. (Thank you, sir.) Take away that confounded footstool, and never let us see thee more!

Now the fairy Amarantha was like a certain dear young lady of whom we have read in early youth. Up to twelve o'clock, attired in sparkling raiment, she leads the dance with the prince (Gradini, known as Grady in his days of banishment at the T. R. Dublin). At supper, she takes her place by the prince's royal father (who is alive now, and still reigns occasionally, so that we will not mention

his revered name). She makes believe to drink from the gilded pasteboard, and to eat of the mighty pudding. She smiles as the good old irascible monarch knocks the prime minister and the cooks about: she blazes in splendour: she beams with a thousand jewels, in comparison with which the Koh-i-noor is a wretched lustreless little pebble: she disappears in a chariot, such as a Lord Mayor never rode in:—and at midnight, who is that young woman tripping homeward through the wet streets in a battered bonnet, a cotton shawl, and a lean frock fringed with the dreary winter flounces?

Our Cinderella is up early in the morning: she does no little portion of the house-work: she dresses her sisters and brothers: she prepares papa's breakfast. On days when she has not to go to morning lessons at her academy, she helps with the dinner. Heaven help us! She has often brought mine when I have dined at home, and owns to having made that famous mutton-broth when I had a cold. Foreigners come to the house—professional gentlemen—to see Slumley on the first floor; exiled captains of Spain and Portugal, companions of the warrior her father. It is surprising how she has learned their accents, and has picked up French, and Italian too. And she played the piano in Mr. Slumley's room sometimes, as I have said; but refrained from that presently, and from visiting him altogether. I suspect he was not a man of principle. His Paper used to make direful attacks upon individual reputations; and you would find theatre and opera people most curiously praised and assaulted in the *Swell*. I recollect meeting him, several years after, in the lobby of the opera, in a very noisy frame of mind, when he heard a certain lady's carriage called, and cried out with exceeding strong language, which need not be accurately reported, "Look at that woman! Confound her! I made her, sir! Got her an engagement when the family was starving, sir! Did you see her, sir? She wouldn't even look at me!" Nor indeed was Mr. S. at that moment a very agreeable object to behold.

Then I remembered that there had been some quarrel with this man, when we lodged in Beak Street together. If difficulty there was, it was solved *ambulando*. He quitted the lodgings, leaving an excellent and costly piano as security for a heavy bill which he owed to Mrs. Prior, and the instrument was presently fetched away by the music-sellers, its owners. But regarding Mr. S——'s valuable biography, let us speak very gently. You see it is "an insult to litera-

ture" to say that there are disreputable and dishonest persons who write in newspapers.

Nothing, dear friend, escapes your penetration: if a joke is made in your company, you are down upon it instanter, and your smile rewards the wag who amuses you: so you knew at once, whilst I was talking of Elizabeth and her academy, that a theatre was meant, where the poor child danced for a guinea or five-and-twenty shillings per week. Nay, she must have had not a little skill and merit to advance to the quarter of a hundred; for she was not pretty at this time, only a rough, tawny-haired filly of a girl, with great eyes. Dolphin, the manager, did not think much of her, and she passed before him in his regiment of Sea-nymphs, or Bayadères, or Fairies, or Mazurka maidens (with their fluttering lances and little scarlet slyboots!) scarcely more noticed than private Jones standing under arms in his company when his Royal Highness the Field-Marshal gallops by. There were no dramatic triumphs for Miss Bellenden: no bouquets were flung at her feet: no cunning Mephistopheles—the emissary of some philandering Faustus outside—corrupted her duenna, or brought her caskets of diamonds. Had there been any such admirer for Bellenden, Dolphin would not only not have been shocked, but he would very likely have raised her salary. As it was, though himself, I fear, a person of loose morals, he respected better things. "That Bellenden's a good hhonest gurl," he said to the present writer: "works hard: gives her money to her family: father a shy old cove. Very good family I hear they are!" and he passes on to some other of the innumerable subjects which engage a manager.

Now, why should a poor lodging-house keeper make such a mighty secret of having a daughter earning an honest guinea by dancing at a theatre? Why persist in calling the theatre an academy? Why did Mrs. Prior speak of it as such, to me who knew what the truth was, and to whom Elizabeth herself made no mystery of her calling?

There are actions and events in its life over which decent Poverty often chooses to cast a veil that is not unbecoming wear. We can all, if we are minded, peer through this poor flimsy screen: often there is no shame behind it:—only empty platters, poor scraps, and other threadbare evidence of want and cold. And who is called on to show his rags to the public, and cry out his hunger in the street?

At this time (her character has developed itself not so amiably since), Mrs. Prior was outwardly respectable ; and yet, as I have said, my groceries were consumed with remarkable rapidity ; my wine and brandy bottles were all leaky, until they were excluded from air under a patent lock ;—my Morel's raspberry jam, of which I was passionately fond, if exposed on the table for a few hours, was always eaten by the cat, or that wonderful little wretch of a maid-of-all-work, so active, yet so patient, so kind, so dirty, so obliging. Was it *the maid* who took those groceries ? I have seen the "Gazza Ladra," and know that poor little maids are sometimes wrongfully accused ; and besides, in my particular case, I own I don't care who the culprit was. At the year's end, a single man is not much poorer for this house-tax which he pays. One Sunday evening, being confined with a cold, and partaking of that mutton-broth which Elizabeth made so well, and which she brought me, I entreated her to bring from the cupboard, of which I gave her the key, a certain brandy-bottle. She saw my face when I looked at her : there was no mistaking its agony. There was scarce any brandy left : it had all leaked away : and it was Sunday, and no good brandy was to be bought that evening.

Elizabeth, I say, saw my grief. She put down the bottle, and she cried : she tried to prevent herself from doing so at first, but she fairly burst into tears.

"My dear—dear child," says I, seizing her hand, "you don't suppose I fancy you——"

"No—no !" she says, drawing the large hand over her eyes. "No— no ! but I saw it when you and Mr. Warrington last 'ad some. Oh ! do have a patting lock !"

"A patent lock, my dear !" I remarked. "How odd that you, who have learned to pronounce Italian and French words so well, should make such strange slips in English ! Your mother speaks well enough."

"She was born a lady. She was not sent to be a milliner's girl, as I was, and then among those noisy girls at that—oh ! that *place !*" cries Bessy, in a sort of desperation, clenching her hand.

Here the bells of St. Beak's began to ring quite cheerily for evening service. I heard "Elizabeth !" cried out from the lower regions by Mrs. Prior's cracked voice. And the maiden went her way to church, which she and her mother never missed of a Sunday ; and I dare say I slept just as well without the brandy-and-water.

Slumley being gone, Mrs. Prior came to me rather wistfully one day, and wanted to know whether I would object to Madame Bentivoglio, the opera-singer, having the first floor? This was too much, indeed! How was my work to go on with that woman practising all day and roaring underneath me? But, after sending away so good a customer, I could not refuse to lend the Priors a little more money; and Prior insisted upon treating me to a new stamp, and making out a new and handsome bill for an amount nearly twice as great as the last: which he had no doubt under heaven, and which he pledged his honour as an officer and a gentleman, that he would meet. Let me see: That was how many years ago?—Thirteen, fourteen, twenty? Never mind. My fair Elizabeth, I think if you saw your poor old father's signature now, you would pay it. I came upon it lately in an old box I haven't opened these fifteen years, along with some letters written—never mind by whom—and an old glove that I used to set an absurd value by; and that emerald-green tabinet waistcoat which kind old Mrs. Macmanus gave me, and which I wore at the L—d L—t—nt's ball, Ph-n-x Park, Dublin, once, when I danced with *her* there! Lord!—Lord! It would no more meet round my waist now than round Daniel Lambert's. How we outgrow things!

But as I never presented this united bill of 43*l.* odd (the first portion of 23*l.*, &c. was advanced by me in order to pay an execution out of the house)—as I never expected to have it paid any more than I did to be Lord Mayor of London,—I say it was a little hard that Mrs. Prior should write off to her brother (she writes a capital letter), blessing Providence that had given him a noble income, promising him the benefit of her prayers, in order that he should long live to enjoy his large salary, and informing him that an obdurate creditor, who shall be nameless (meaning me), who had Captain Prior *in his power* (as if, being in possession of that dingy scrawl, I should have known what to do with it), who held Mr. Prior's acceptance for 43*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.* due on the 3rd July (my bill), would infallibly bring their family to RUIN, unless a part of the money was paid up. When I went up to my old college, and called on Sargent, at Boniface Lodge, he treated me as civilly as if I had been an undergraduate; scarcely spoke to me in hall, where, of course, I dined at the Fellows' table; and only asked me to one of Mrs. Sargent's confounded tea-parties during the whole time of my stay. Now it was by this man's entreaty that I went to lodge at Prior's; he talked to me after dinner one day, he

hummed, he ha'd, he blushed, he prated in his pompous way, about an unfortunate sister in London—fatal early marriage—husband, Captain Prior, Knight of the Swan with Two Necks of Portugal, most distinguished officer, but imprudent speculator—advantageous lodgings in the centre of London, quiet, though near the Clubs—if I was ill (I am a confirmed invalid), Mrs. Prior, his sister, would nurse me like a mother. So, in a word, I went to Prior's: I took the rooms: I was attracted by some children: Amelia Jane (that little dirty maid before mentioned) dragging a go-cart, containing a little dirty pair; another marching by them, carrying a fourth well nigh as big as himself. These little folks, having threaded the mighty flood of Regent Street, debouched into the quiet creek of Beak Street, just as I happened to follow them. And the door at which the small caravan halted,—the very door I was in search of,—was opened by Elizabeth, then only just emerging from childhood, with tawny hair falling into her solemn eyes.

The aspect of these little people, which would have deterred many, happened to attract me. I am a lonely man. I may have been ill-treated by some one once, but that is neither here nor there. If I had had children of my own, I think I should have been good to them. I thought Prior a dreadful vulgar wretch, and his wife a scheming, greedy little woman. But the children amused me: and I took the rooms, liking to hear overhead in the morning the patter of their little feet. The person I mean has several;—husband, judge in the West Indies. *Allons!* now you know how I came to live at Mrs. Prior's.

Though I am now a steady, a *confirmed* old bachelor (I shall call myself Mr. Batchelor, if you please, in this story; and there is some one far—far away who knows why I will NEVER take another title), I was a gay young fellow enough once. I was not above the pleasures of youth: in fact, I learned quadrilles on purpose to dance with her that long vacation when I went to read with my young friend, Lord Viscount Poldoody at Dub—psha! Be still, thou foolish heart! Perhaps I misspent my time as an undergraduate. Perhaps I read too many novels, occupied myself too much with "elegant literature" (that used to be our phrase), and spoke too often at the Union, where I had a considerable reputation. But those fine words got me no college prizes: I missed my fellowship: was rather in disgrace with my relations afterwards, but had a small independence of my

own, which I eked out by taking a few pupils for little-goes and the common degree. At length, a relation dying, and leaving me a further small income, I left the university, and came to reside in London.

Now in my third year at college, there came to St. Boniface a young gentleman, who was one of the few gentlemen-pensioners of our society. His popularity speedily was great. A kindly and simple youth, he would have been liked, I dare say, even though he had been no richer than the rest of us; but this is certain, that flattery, worldliness, mammon-worship, are vices as well known to young as to old boys; and a rich lad at school or college has his followers, tuft-hunters, led-captains, little courts, just as much as any elderly millionaire of Pall Mall, who gazes round his club to see whom he shall take home to dinner, while humble trencher-men wait anxiously, thinking—Ah! will he take me this time? or will he ask that abominable sneak and toady Henchman again? Well—well! this is an old story about parasites and flatterers. My dear good sir, I am not for a moment going to say that *you* ever were one; and I dare say it was very base and mean of us to like a man chiefly on account of his money. "I know"—Fred Lovel used to say—"I know fellows come to my rooms because I have a large allowance, and plenty of my poor old governor's wine, and give good dinners: I am not deceived; but, at least, it is pleasanter to come to me and have good dinners, and good wine, than to go to Jack Highson's dreary tea and turnout, or to Ned Roper's abominable Oxbridge port." And so I admit at once that Lovel's parties *were* more agreeable than most men's in the college. Perhaps the goodness of the fare, by pleasing the guests, made them more pleasant. A dinner in hall, and a pewter plate is all very well, and I can say grace before it with all my heart; but a dinner with fish from London, game, and two or three nice little *entrées*, is better—and there was no better cook in the university than ours at St. Boniface, and ah me! there were appetites then, and digestions which rendered the good dinner doubly good.

Between me and young Lovel a friendship sprang up, which, I trust, even the publication of this story will not diminish. There is a period, immediately after the taking of his bachelor's degree, when many a university-man finds himself embarrassed. The tradesmen rather rudely press for a settlement of their accounts. Those prints we ordered *calidi juventâ;* those shirt-studs and pins which the

jewellers would persist in thrusting into our artless bosoms; those fine coats we would insist on having for our books, as well as ourselves; all these have to be paid for by the graduate. And my father, who was then alive, refusing to meet these demands, under the—I own—just plea, that my allowance had been ample, and that my half-sisters ought not to be mulcted of their slender portions in consequence of my extravagance, I should have been subject to very serious inconvenience—nay, possibly, to personal incarceration—had not Lovel, at the risk of rustication, rushed up to London to his mother (who then had *especial reasons* for being very gracious with her son), obtained a supply of money from her, and brought it to me at Mr. Shackell's horrible hotel, where I was lodged. He had tears in his kind eyes; he grasped my hand a hundred and hundred times as he flung the notes into my lap; and the recording tutor (Sargent was only tutor then), who was going to bring him up before the master for breach of discipline, dashed away a drop from his own lid, when, with a moving eloquence, I told what had happened, and blotted out the transaction with some particular old 1811 Port, of which we freely partook in his private rooms that evening. By laborious instalments, I had the happiness to pay Lovel back. I took pupils, as I said; I engaged in literary pursuits: I became connected with a literary periodical, and, I am ashamed to say, I imposed myself upon the public as a good classical scholar. I was not thought the less learned, when, my relative dying, I found myself in possession of a small independency; and my "Translations from the Greek," my "Poems by Beta," and my articles in the paper of which I was part proprietor for several years, have had their little success in their day.

Indeed at Oxbridge, if I did not obtain university honours, at least I showed literary tastes. I got the prize essay one year at Boniface, and plead guilty to having written essays, poems, and a tragedy. My college friends had a joke at my expense (a very small joke serves to amuse those port-wine-bibbing fogies, and keeps them laughing for ever so long a time)—they are welcome, I say, to make merry at my charges—in respect of a certain bargain which I made on coming to London, and in which, had I been Moses Primrose purchasing green spectacles, I could scarcely have been more taken in. *My* Jenkinson was an old college acquaintance, whom I was idiot enough to imagine a respectable man: the fellow had a very smooth tongue, and sleek, sanctified exterior. He was rather a

popular preacher, and used to cry a good deal in the pulpit. He, and a queer wine-merchant and bill-discounter, Sherrick by name, had somehow got possession of that neat little literary paper, the *Museum*, which, perhaps, you remember; and this eligible literary property my friend Honeyman, with his wheedling tongue, induced me to purchase. I bear no malice: the fellow is in India now, where I trust he pays his butcher and baker. He was in dreadful straits for money when he sold me the *Museum*. He began crying when I told him some short time afterwards that he was a swindler, and from behind his pocket-handkerchief sobbed a prayer that I should one day think better of him; whereas my remarks to the same effect produced an exactly contrary impression upon his accomplice, Sherrick, who burst out laughing in my face, and said, "The more fool you." Mr. Sherrick was right. He was a fool, without mistake, who had any money-dealing with him; and poor Honeyman was right, too; I don't think so badly of him as I did. A fellow so hardly pinched for money could not resist the temptation of extracting it from such a greenhorn. I dare say I gave myself airs as editor of that confounded *Museum*, and proposed to educate the public taste, to diffuse morality and sound literature throughout the nation, and to pocket a liberal salary in return for my services. I dare say I printed my own sonnets, my own tragedy, my own verses (to a Being who shall be nameless, but whose conduct has caused a faithful heart to bleed not a little). I dare say I wrote satirical articles, in which I piqued myself upon the fineness of my wit, and criticisms, got up for the nonce out of encyclopædias and biographical dictionaries; so that I would be actually astounded at my own knowledge. I dare say I made a gaby of myself to the world: pray, my good friend, hast thou never done likewise? If thou hast never been a fool, be sure thou wilt never be a wise man.

I think it was my brilliant *confrère* on the first floor (he had pecuniary transactions with Sherrick, and visited two or three of her Majesty's metropolitan prisons at that gentleman's suit) who first showed me how grievously I had been cheated in the newspaper matter. Slumley wrote for a paper printed at our office. The same boy often brought proofs to both of us—a little bit of a puny bright-eyed chap, who looked scarce twelve years old, when he was sixteen; who in wit was a man, when in stature he was a child,—like many other children of the poor.

This little Dick Bedford used to sit many hours asleep on my landing-place or Slumley's, whilst we were preparing our invaluable compositions within our respective apartments. S—— was a good-natured reprobate, and gave the child of his meat and his drink. I used to like to help the little man from my breakfast, and see him enjoy the meal. As he sat, with his bag on his knees, his head sunk in sleep, his little high-lows scarce reaching the floor, Dick made a touching little picture. The whole house was fond of him. The tipsy captain nodded him a welcome as he swaggered downstairs, stock, and coat, and waistcoat in hand, to his worship's toilette in the back kitchen. The children and Dick were good friends; and Elizabeth patronized him, and talked with him now and again, in her grave way. You know Clancy the composer?—know him better, perhaps, under his name of Friederich Donner? Donner used to write music to Slumley's words, or *vice versâ;* and would come now and again to Beak Street, where he and his poet would try their joint work at the piano. At the sound of that music, little Dick's eyes used to kindle. "Oh, it's prime!" said the young enthusiast. And I will say, that good-natured miscreant of a Slumley not only gave the child pence, but tickets for the play, concerts, and so forth. Dick had a neat little suit of clothes at home; his mother made him a very nice little waistcoat out of my undergraduate's gown, and he and she, a decent woman, when in their best raiment, looked respectable enough for any theatre-pit in England.

Amongst other places of public amusement which he attended, Mr. Dick frequented the academy where Miss Bellenden danced, and whence poor Elizabeth Prior issued forth after midnight in her shabby frock. And once, the Captain, Elizabeth's father and protector, being unable to walk very accurately, and noisy and incoherent in his speech, so that the attention of Messieurs of the police was directed towards him, Dick came up, placed Elizabeth and her father in a cab, paid the fare with his own money, and brought the whole party home in triumph, himself sitting on the box of the vehicle. I chanced to be coming home myself (from one of Mrs. Wateringham's elegant tea *soirées*, in Dorset Square), and reached my door just at the arrival of Dick and his caravan. "Here, cabby!" says Dick, handing out the fare, and looking with his brightest eyes. It is pleasanter to look at that beaming little face, than at the Captain yonder, reeling into his house, supported by his daughter. Dick cried, Elizabeth told me,

when, a week afterwards, she wanted to pay him back his shilling; and she said he was a strange child, that he was.

I revert to my friend Lovel. I was coaching Lovel for his degree (which, between ourselves, I think he never would have attained), when he suddenly announced to me, from Weymouth, where he was passing the vacation, his intention to quit the university, and to travel abroad. "Events have happened, dear friend," he wrote, "which will make my mother's home miserable to me (I little knew when I went to town about your business, what caused her *wonderful complaisance* to me). She would have broken my heart, Charles" (my Christian name is Charles), "but its wounds have found *a consoler!*"

Now, in this little chapter, there are some little mysteries propounded, upon which, were I not above any such artifice, I might easily leave the reader to ponder for a month.

1. Why did Mrs. Prior, at the lodgings, persist in calling the theatre at which her daughter danced the academy?

2. What were the special reasons why Mrs. Lovel should be very gracious with her son, and give him 150*l.* as soon as he asked for the money?

3. Why was Fred Lovel's heart nearly broken? And 4. Who was his consoler?

I answer these at once, and without the slightest attempt at delay or circumlocution. 1. Mrs. Prior, who had repeatedly received money from her brother, John Erasmus Sargent, D.D., Master of St. Boniface College, knew perfectly well that if the Master (whom she already pestered out of his life) heard that she had sent a niece of his on the stage, he would never give her another shilling.

2. The reason why Emma, widow of the late Adolphus Loeffel, of Whitechapel Road, sugar-baker, was so particularly gracious to her son, Adolphus Frederick Lovel, Esq., of St. Boniface College, Oxbridge, and principal partner in the house of Loeffel aforesaid, an infant, was that she, Emma, was about to contract a second marriage with the Rev. Samuel Bonnington.

3. Fred Lovel's heart was so very much broken by this intelligence, that he gave himself airs of Hamlet, dressed in black, wore his long fair hair over his eyes, and exhibited a hundred signs of grief and desperation: until—

4. Louisa (widow of the late Sir Popham Baker, of Bakerstown, co. Kilkenny, Baronet,) induced Mr. Lovel to take a trip on the

Rhine with her and Cecilia, fourth and only unmarried daughter of the aforesaid Sir Popham Baker, deceased.

My opinion of Cecilia I have candidly given in a previous page. I adhere to that opinion. I shall not repeat it. The subject is disagreeable to me, as the woman herself was in life. What Fred found in her to admire I cannot tell: lucky for us all that tastes, men, women, vary. You will never see her alive in this history. That is her picture, painted by the late Mr. Gandish. She stands fingering that harp with which she has often driven me half mad with her "Tara's Halls" and her "Poor Marianne." She used to bully Fred so, and be so rude to his guests, that in order to pacify her, he would meanly say, "Do, my love, let us have a little music!" and thrumpty—thrumpty, off would go her gloves, and "Tara's Halls" would begin. "The harp that *once*," indeed! the accursed catgut scarce knew any other music, and "once" was a hundred times at least in *my* hearing. Then came the period when I was treated to the cold joint which I have mentioned; and, not liking it, I gave up going to Shrublands.

So, too, did my Lady Baker, but not of *her own free will*, mind you. *She* did not quit the premises because her reception was too cold, but because the house was made a great deal too hot for her. I remember Fred coming to me in high spirits, and describing to me, with no little humour, a great battle between Cecilia and Lady Baker, and her ladyship's defeat and flight. She fled, however, only as far as Putney village, where she formed again, as it were, and fortified herself in a lodging. Next day she made a desperate and feeble attack, presenting herself at Shrublands lodge-gate, and threatening that she and sorrow would sit down before it; and that all the world should know how a daughter treated her mother. But the gate was locked, and Barnet, the gardener, appeared behind it, saying, "Since you *are* come, my lady, perhaps you will pay my missis the four-and-twenty shillings you borrowed of her." And he grinned at her through the bars, until she fled before him, cowering. Lovel paid the little forgotten account; the best four-and-twenty shillings he had ever laid out, he said.

Eight years passed away; during the last four of which I scarce saw my old friend, except at clubs and taverns, where we met privily, and renewed, not old warmth and hilarity, but old kindness. One winter he took his family abroad; Cecilia's health was delicate,

I AM REMINDED TO CALCULATE

Lovel told me, and the doctor had advised that she should spend a winter in the south. He did not stay with them: he had pressing affairs at home; he had embarked in many businesses besides the paternal sugar-bakery; was concerned in companies, a director of a joint-stock bank, a man in whose fire were many irons. A faithful governess was with the children; a faithful man and maid were in attendance on the invalid; and Lovel, adoring his wife, as he certainly did, yet supported her absence with great equanimity.

In the spring I was not a little scared to read amongst the deaths in the newspaper:—"At Naples, of scarlet fever, on the 25th ult., Cecilia, wife of Frederick Lovel, Esq., and daughter of the late Sir Popham Baker, Bart." I knew what my friend's grief would be. He had hurried abroad at the news of her illness; he did not reach Naples in time to receive the last words of his poor Cecilia.

Some months after the catastrophe, I had a note from Shrublands. Lovel wrote quite in the old affectionate tone. He begged his dear old friend to go to him, and console him in his solitude. Would I come to dinner that evening?

Of course I went off to him straightway. I found him in deep sables in the drawing-room with his children, and I confess I was not astonished to see my Lady Baker once more in that room.

"You seem surprised to see me here, Mr. Batchelor?" says her ladyship, with that grace and good-breeding which she generally exhibited; for if she accepted benefits, she took care to insult those from whom she received them.

"Indeed, no," said I, looking at Lovel, who piteously hung down his head. He had his little Cissy at his knee: he was sitting under the portrait of the defunct musician, whose harp, now muffled in leather, stood dimly in the corner of the room.

"I am here not at my own wish, but from a feeling of duty towards that—departed—angel!" says Lady Baker, pointing to the picture.

"I am sure when mamma was here, you were always quarrelling," says little Popham, with a scowl.

"This is the way those innocent children have been taught to regard me," cries grandmamma.

"Silence, Pop," says papa, "and don't be a rude boy."

"Isn't Pop a rude boy?" echoes Cissy.

"Silence, Pop," continues papa, "or you must go up to Miss Prior."

## CHAPTER II.

### IN WHICH MISS PRIOR IS KEPT AT THE DOOR.

OF course we all know who she was, the Miss Prior of Shrublands, whom papa and grandmamma called to the unruly children. Years had passed since I had shaken the Beak Street dust off my feet. The brass plate of "Prior" was removed from the once familiar door, and screwed, for what I can tell, on to the late reprobate owner's coffin. A little eruption of mushroom-formed brass knobs I saw on the door-post when I passed by it last week, and CAFÉ DES AMBASSADEURS was thereon inscribed, with three fly-blown blue teacups, a couple of coffee-pots of the well-known Britannia metal, and two freckled copies of the *Indépendance Belge* hanging over the window-blind. Were those their Excellencies the

Ambassadors at the door, smoking cheroots? Pool and Billiards were written on their countenances, their hats, their elbows. They may have been ambassadors down on their luck, as the phrase is. They were in disgrace, no doubt, at the court of her imperial majesty Queen Fortune. Men as shabby have retrieved their disgraces ere now, washed their cloudy faces, strapped their dingy waistcoats with cordons, and stepped into fine carriages from quarters not a whit more reputable than the "Café des Ambassadeurs." If I lived in the Leicester Square neighbourhood, and kept a café, I would always treat foreigners with respect. They may be billiard-markers now, or doing a little shady police business; but why should they not afterwards be generals and great officers of state? Suppose that gentleman is at present a barber, with his tongs and stick of fixature for the moustaches, how do you know he has not his epaulettes and his *bâton de maréchal* in the same pouch? I see engraven on the second-floor bell, on my rooms, "Plugwell." Who can Plugwell be, whose feet now warm at the fire where I sat many a long evening? And this gentleman with the fur collar, the straggling beard, the frank and engaging leer, the somewhat husky voice, who is calling out on the doorstep, "Step in, and 'ave it done. Your correct likeness, only one shilling"—is he an ambassador too? Ah, no: he is only the *chargé-d'affaires* of a photographer who lives upstairs: no doubt where the little ones used to be. Bless me! Photography was an infant, and in the nursery, too, when *we* lived in Beak Street.

Shall I own that, for old time's sake, I went upstairs, and "'ad it done"—that correct likeness, price one shilling? Would Some One (I have said, I think, that the party in question is well married in a distant island) like to have the thing, I wonder, and be reminded of a man whom she knew in life's prime, with brown curly locks, as she looked on the effigy of this elderly gentleman, with a forehead as bare as a billiard-ball?

As I went up and down that darkling stair, the ghosts of the Prior children peeped out from the banisters; the little faces smiled in the twilight: it may be wounds (of the heart) throbbed and bled again,—oh, how freshly and keenly! How infernally I have suffered behind that door in that room—I mean that one where Plugwell now lives. Confound Plugwell! I wonder what that woman thinks of me as she sees me shaking my fist at the door?

Do you think me mad, madam? I don't care if you do. Do you think when I spoke anon of the ghosts of Prior's children, I mean that any of them are dead? None are, that I know of. A great hulking Bluecoat boy, with fluffy whiskers, spoke to me not long since, in an awful bass voice, and announced his name as "Gus Prior." And "How's Elizabeth?" he added, nodding his bullet head. Elizabeth, indeed, you great vulgar boy! Elizabeth,—and, by the way, how long we have been keeping her waiting!

You see, as I beheld her, a heap of memories struck upon me, and I could not help chattering; when of course—and you are perfectly right, only you might just as well have left the observation alone: for I knew quite well what you were going to say—when I had much better have held my tongue. Elizabeth means a history to me. She came to me at a critical period of my life. Bleeding and wounded from the conduct of that other individual (by her present name of Mrs. O'D—her present *O'D*-ous name—I say, I will never —never call her)—desperately wounded and miserable on my return from a neighbouring capital, I went back to my lodgings in Beak Street, and there there grew up a strange intimacy between me and my landlady's young daughter. I told her my story—indeed, I believe I told anybody who would listen. She seemed to compassionate me. She would come wistfully into my rooms, bringing me my gruel and things (I could scarcely bear to eat for a while after—after that affair to which I may have alluded before)—she used to come to me, and she used to pity me, and I used to tell her all, and to tell her over and over again. Days and days have I passed tearing my heart out in that second-floor room which answers to the name of Plugwell now. Afternoon after afternoon have I spent there, and poured out my story of love and wrong to Elizabeth, showed her that waistcoat I told you of—that glove (her hand wasn't so very small either)—her letters, those two or three vacuous, meaningless letters, with "My dear sir—Mamma hopes you will come to tea;" or, "If dear Mr. Batchelor *should* be riding in the Phœnix Park near the *Long Milestone*, about 2, my sister and I will be in the car, and," &c.; or, "Oh, you kind man! the tickets" (she called it *tickuts*—by heaven! she did) "were too welcome, and the *bouquays* too lovely" (this word, I saw, had been operated on with a penknife. I found no faults, not even in her spelling—then); or—never mind what more. But more of this *puling*, of this *humbug*, of this *bad spelling*, of this infernal jilt-

ing, swindling, heartless hypocrisy (all her mother's doing, I own; for until he *got his place*, my rival was not so well received as I was)—more of this RUBBISH, I say, I showed Elizabeth, and she pitied me!

She used to come to me day after day, and I used to talk to her. She used not to say much. Perhaps she did not listen; but I did not care for that. On—and on—and on I would go with my prate about my passion, my wrongs, and despair; and untiring as my complaints were, still more constant was my little hearer's compassion. Mamma's shrill voice would come to put an end to our conversation, and she would rise up with an "Oh, bother!" and go away: but the next day the good girl was sure to come to me again, when we would have another repetition of our tragedy.

I dare say you are beginning to suppose (what, after all, is a very common case, and certainly *no conjuror* is wanted to make the guess) that out of all this crying and sentimentality, which a soft-hearted old fool of a man poured out to a young girl—out of all this whimpering and pity, something which is said to be akin to pity might arise. But in this, my good madam, you are utterly wrong. Some people have the small-pox twice; *I do not.* In my case, if a heart is broke, it's broke: if a flower is withered, it's withered. If I choose to put my grief in a ridiculous light, why not? why do you suppose I am going to make a tragedy of such an old used-up, battered, stale, vulgar, trivial every-day subject as a jilt who plays with a man's passion, and laughs at him, and leaves him? Tragedy indeed! Oh, yes! poison—black-edged note-paper—Waterloo Bridge—one more unfortunate, and so forth! No: if she goes, let her go!—*si celeres quatit pennas*, I puff the what-d'ye-call-it away! But I'll have no *tragedy*, mind you.

Well, it must be confessed that a man desperately in love (as I fear I must own I then was, and a good deal cut up by Glorvina's conduct) is a most selfish being: whilst women are so soft and unselfish that they can forget or disguise their own sorrows for a while, whilst they minister to a friend in affliction. I did not see, though I talked with her daily, on my return from that accursed Dublin, that my little Elizabeth was pale and *distraite*, and sad, and silent. She would sit quite dumb whilst I chattered, her hands between her knees, or draw one of them over her eyes. She would say, "Oh, yes! Poor fellow—poor fellow!" now and again, as giving a melancholy confirmation of my dismal stories; but mostly she remained quiet, her head

drooping towards the ground, a hand to her chin, her feet to the fender.

I was one day harping on the usual string. I was telling Elizabeth how, after presents had been accepted, after letters had passed between us (if her scrawl could be called letters, if my impassioned song could be so construed), after everything but the actual word had passed our lips—I was telling Elizabeth how, on one accursed day, Glorvina's mother greeted me on my arrival in M-rr-n Square, by saying, "Dear, dear Mr. Batchelor, we look on you quite as one of the family! Congratulate me—congratulate my child! Dear Tom has got his appointment as Recorder of Tobago; and it is to be a match between him and his cousin Glory."

"His cousin *What!*" I shriek with a maniac laugh.

"My poor Glorvina! Sure the children have been fond of each other ever since they could speak. I knew your kind heart would be the first to rejoice in their happiness."

And so, say I—ending the story—I, who thought myself loved, was left without a pang of pity: I, who could mention a hundred reasons why I thought Glorvina well disposed to me, was told she regarded me as an *uncle!* Were her letters such as nieces write? Who ever heard of an uncle walking round Merrion Square for hours of a rainy night, and looking up to a bedroom window, because his *niece*, forsooth, was behind it? I had set my whole heart on the cast, and this was the return I got for it. For months she cajoles me—her eyes follow me, her cursed smiles welcome and fascinate me, and at a moment, at the beck of another—she laughs at me and leaves me!

At this, my little pale Elizabeth, still hanging down, cries, "Oh, the villain! the villain!" and sobs so that you might have thought her little heart would break.

"Nay," said I, "my dear, Mr. O'Dowd is no villain. His uncle, Sir Hector, was as gallant an old officer as any in the service. His aunt was a Molloy, of Molloystown, and they are of excellent family, though, I believe, of embarrassed circumstances; and young Tom——"

"*Tom?*" cries Elizabeth, with a pale, bewildered look. "*His name wasn't Tom*, dear Mr. Batchelor; *his name was Woo-woo-illiam!*" and the tears begin again.

Ah, my child! my child! my poor young creature! and you, too,

have felt the infernal stroke. You, too, have passed the tossing nights of pain—have heard the dreary hours toll—have looked at the cheerless sunrise with your blank sleepless eyes—have woke out of dreams, mayhap, in which the beloved one was smiling on you, whispering love-words—oh! how sweet and fondly remembered! What!—your heart has been robbed, too, and your treasury is rifled and empty!—poor girl! And I looked in that sad face, and saw no grief there! You could do your little sweet endeavour to soothe my wounded heart, and I never saw yours was bleeding! Did you suffer more than I did, my poor little maid? I hope not. Are you so young, and is all the flower of life blighted for you? the cup without savour, the sun blotted, or almost invisible over your head? The truth came on me all at once: I felt ashamed that my own selfish grief should have made me blind to hers.

"What!" said I, "my poor child? Was it . . .?" and I pointed with my finger *downwards*.

She nodded her poor head.

I knew it was the lodger who had taken the first floor shortly after Slumley's departure. He was an officer in the Bombay Army. He had had the lodgings for three months. He had sailed for India shortly before I returned home from Dublin.

Elizabeth is waiting all this time—shall she come in? No, not yet. I have still a little more to say about the Priors.

You understand that she was no longer Miss Prior of Beak Street, and that mansion, even at the time of which I write, had been long handed over to other tenants. The Captain dead, his widow with many tears pressed me to remain with her, and I did, never having been able to resist that kind of appeal. Her statements regarding her affairs were not strictly correct.—Are not women sometimes incorrect about money matters?—A landlord (not unjustly indignant) quickly handed over the mansion in Beak Street to other tenants. The Queen's taxes swooped down on poor Mrs. Prior's scanty furniture—on hers?—on mine likewise: on my neatly-bound college books, emblazoned with the effigy of Bonifacius, our patron, and of Bishop Budgeon, our founder; on my elegant Raphael Morghen prints, purchased in undergraduate days—(ye Powers! what *did* make us boys go tick for fifteen-guinea proofs of Raphael, Dying Stags, Duke of Wellington Banquets, and the like?); my harmonium, at which SOME ONE has warbled songs of my composition—(I mean the

words, artfully describing my passion, my hopes, or my despair); on my rich set of Bohemian glass, bought on the Zeil, Frankfort O. M.; on my picture of my father, the late Captain Batchelor (Hoppner), R.N., in white ducks, and a telescope, pointing, of course, to a tempest, in the midst of which was a naval engagement; on my poor mother's miniature, by old Adam Buck, in pencil and pink, with no waist to speak of at all; my tea and cream pots (bullion), with a hundred such fond knicknacks as decorate the chamber of a lonely man. I found all these household treasures in possession of the myrmidons of the law, and had to pay the Priors' taxes with this hand, before I could be redintegrated in my own property. Mrs. Prior could only pay me back with a widow's tears and blessings (Prior having quitted a world where he had long ceased to be of use or ornament). The tears and blessings, I say, she offered me freely, and they were all very well. But why go on tampering with the tea-box, madam? Why put your finger—your finger?—your whole paw—in the jam-pot? And it is a horrible fact that the wine and spirit bottles were just as leaky after Prior's decease as they had been during his disreputable lifetime. One afternoon, having a sudden occasion to return to my lodgings, I found my wretched landlady in the very act of marauding sherry. She gave an hysterical laugh, and then burst into tears. She declared that since her poor Prior's death she hardly knew what she said or did. She may have been incoherent; she was; but she certainly spoke truth on *this* occasion.

I am speaking lightly—flippantly, if you please—about this old Mrs. Prior, with her hard, eager smile, her wizened face, her frowning look, her cruel voice; and yet, goodness knows, I could, if I liked, be serious as a sermonizer. Why, this woman had once red cheeks, and was well-looking enough, and told few lies, and stole no sherry, and felt the tender passions of the heart, and I dare say kissed the weak old beneficed clergyman her father very fondly and remorsefully that night when she took leave of him to skip round to the back garden-gate and run away with Mr. Prior. Maternal instinct she had, for she nursed her young as best she could from her lean breast, and went about hungrily, robbing and pilfering for them. On Sundays she furbished up that threadbare black silk gown and bonnet, ironed the collar, and clung desperately to church. She had a feeble pencil-drawing of the vicarage in Dorsetshire, and *silhouettes* of her father and mother, which were hung up in the lodgings wherever she went.

She migrated much: wherever she went she fastened on the gown of the clergyman of the parish; spoke of her dear father the vicar, of her wealthy and gifted brother the Master of Boniface, with a reticence which implied that Dr. Sargent might do more for his poor sister and her family, if he would. She plumed herself (oh! those poor moulting old plumes!) upon belonging to the clergy; had read a good deal of good sound old-fashioned theology in early life, and wrote a noble hand, in which she had been used to copy her father's sermons. She used to put cases of conscience, to present her humble duty to the Rev. Mr. Green, and ask explanation of such and such a passage of his admirable sermon, and bring the subject round so as to be reminded of certain quotations of Hooker, Beveridge, Jeremy Taylor. I think she had an old commonplace book with a score of these extracts, and she worked them in very amusingly and dexterously into her conversation. Green would be interested: perhaps pretty young Mrs. Green would call, secretly rather shocked at the coldness of old Dr. Brown, the rector, about Mrs. Prior. Between Green and Mrs. Prior money transactions would ensue: Mrs. Green's visits would cease: Mrs. Prior was an expensive woman to know. I remember Pye of Maudlin, just before he "went over," was perpetually in Mrs. Prior's back parlour with little books, pictures, medals, &c. &c.—you know. They called poor Jack a Jesuit at Oxbridge; but one year at Rome I met him (with a half-crown shaved out of his head, and a hat as big as Don Basilio's); and he said, "My dear Batchelor, do you know that person at your lodgings? I think she was an artful creature! She borrowed fourteen pounds of me, and I forget how much of—seven, I think—of Barfoot, of Corpus, just—just before we were received. And I believe she absolutely got another loan from Pummel, to be able to get out of the hands of us Jesuits. Are you going to hear the Cardinal? Do—do go and hear him—everybody does: it's the most fashionable thing in Rome." And from this I opine that there are slyboots in other communions besides that of Rome.

Now Mamma Prior had not been unaware of the love-passages between her daughter and the fugitive Bombay captain. Like Elizabeth, she called Captain Walkingham "villain" readily enough; but, if I know woman's nature in the least (and I don't), the old schemer had thrown her daughter only too frequently in the officer's way, had done no small portion of the flirting herself, had allowed

poor Bessy to receive presents from Captain Walkingham, and had been the manager and directress of much of the mischief which ensued. You see, in this humble class of life, unprincipled mothers *will* coax and wheedle and cajole gentlemen whom they suppose to be eligible, in order to procure an establishment for their darling children! What the Prioress did was done from the best motives of course. "Never—never did the monster see Bessy without me, or one or two of her brothers and sisters, and Jack and dear Ellen are as sharp children as any in England!" protested the indignant Mrs. Prior to me; "and if one of my boys had been grown up, Walkingham never would have dared to act as he did—the unprincipled wretch! My poor husband would have punished the villain as he deserved; but what could he do in his shattered state of health? Oh! you men,—you men, Mr. Batchelor! how *unprincipled* you are!"

"Why, my good Mrs. Prior," said I, "you let Elizabeth come to my room often enough."

"To have the conversation of her uncle's friend, of an educated man, of a man so much older than herself! Of course, dear sir! Would not a mother wish every advantage for her child? and whom could I trust, if not you, who have ever been such a friend to me and mine?" asks Mrs. Prior, wiping her dry eyes with the corner of her handkerchief, as she stands by my fire, my monthly bills in hand,—written in her neat old-fashioned writing, and calculated with that prodigal liberality which she always exercised in compiling the little accounts between us. "Why, bless me!" says my cousin, little Mrs. Skinner, coming to see me once when I was unwell, and examining one of the just-mentioned documents,—"bless me! Charles, you consume more tea than all my family, though we are seven in the parlour, and as much sugar and butter,—well, it's no wonder you are bilious!"

"But then, my dear, I like my tea so *very* strong," said I; "and you take yours uncommonly mild. I have remarked it at your parties."

"It's a shame that a man should be robbed so," cried Mrs. S.

"How kind it is of you to cry thieves, Flora!" I reply.

"It's my duty, Charles!" exclaims my cousin. "And I should like to know who that great, tall, gawky, red-haired girl in the passage is!"

Ah me! the name of the only woman who ever had possession of this heart was not Elizabeth; though I own I did think at one time that my little schemer of a landlady would not have objected if I had proposed to make Miss Prior Mrs. Batchelor. And it is not only the poor and needy who have this mania, but the rich, too. In the very highest circles, as I am informed by the best authorities, this match-making goes on. Ah woman—woman!—ah wedded wife!—ah fond mother of fair daughters! how strange thy passion is to add to thy titles that of mother-in-law! I am told, when you have got the title, it is often but a bitterness and a disappointment. Very likely the son-in-law is rude to you, the coarse, ungrateful brute! and very possibly the daughter rebels, the thankless serpent! And yet you will go on scheming: and having met only with disappointment from Louisa and her husband, you will try and get one for Jemima, and Maria, and down even to little Toddles coming out of the nursery in her red shoes! When you see her with little Tommy, your neighbour's child, fighting over the same Noah's ark, or clambering on the same rocking-horse, I make no doubt, in your fond silly head, you are thinking, "Will those little people meet some twenty years hence?" And you give Tommy a very large piece of cake, and have a fine present for him on the Christmas tree—you know you do, though he is but a rude, noisy child, and has already beaten Toddles, and taken her doll away from her, and made her cry. I remember, when I myself was suffering from the conduct of a young woman in—in a capital which is distinguished by a viceregal court—and from *her* heartlessness, as well as that of her relative, who I once thought would be *my* mother-in-law—shrieking out to a friend who happened to be spouting some lines from Tennyson's "Ulysses:"—"By George! Warrington, I have no doubt that when the young sirens set their green caps at the old Greek captain and his crew, waving and beckoning him with their white arms and glancing smiles, and wheedling him with their sweetest pipes—I make no doubt, sir, that *the mother sirens* were behind the rocks (with their dyed fronts and cheeks painted, so as to resist water), and calling out—'Now, Halcyone, my child, that air from the Pirata! Now, Glaukopis, dear, look well at that old gentleman at the helm! Bathykolpos, love, there's a young sailor on the maintop, who will tumble right down into your lap if you beckon him!' And so on—and so on." And I laughed a wild shriek of despair. For I, too, have been on

the dangerous island, and come away thence, mad, furious, wanting a strait-waistcoat.

And so, when a white-armed siren, named Glorvina, was bedevilling *me* with her all too tempting ogling and singing, I did not see at the time, but *now* I know, that her artful mother was egging that artful child on.

How, when the Captain died, bailiffs and executions took possession of his premises, I have told in a previous page, nor do I care to enlarge much upon the odious theme. I think the bailiffs were on the premises before Prior's exit: but he did not know of their presence. If I had to buy them out, 'twas no great matter: only I say it *was* hard of Mrs. Prior to represent me in the character of Shylock to the Master of Boniface. Well—well! I suppose there are other gentlemen besides Mr. Charles Batchelor who have been misrepresented in this life. Sargent and I made up matters afterwards, and Miss Bessy was the cause of our coming together again. "Upon my word, my dear Batchelor," says he one Christmas, when I went up to the old college, "I did not know how much my—ahem!—my family was obliged to you! My—ahem!—niece, Miss Prior, has informed me of various acts of—ahem!—generosity which you showed to my poor sister, and her still more wretched husband. You got my second—ahem!—nephew—pardon me if I forget his Christian name—into the what-d'you-call'em—Bluecoat School; you have been, on various occasions, of considerable pecuniary service to my sister's family. A man need not take high university honours to have a good—ahem!—heart; and, upon my word, Batchelor, I and my—ahem!—wife are sincerely obliged to you!"

"I tell you what, Master," said I, "there *is* a point upon which you ought really to be obliged to me, and in which I have been the means of putting money into your pocket too."

"I confess I fail to comprehend you," says the Master, with his grandest air.

"I have got you and Mrs. Sargent a very good governess for your children, at the very smallest remuneration," say I.

"Do you know the charges that unhappy sister of mine and her family have put me to already?" says the Master, turning as red as his hood.

"They have formed the frequent subject of your conversation," I replied. "You have had Bessy as a governess . . ."

"A nursery governess—she has learned Latin, and a great deal more, since she has been in my house!" cries the Master.

"A nursery governess at the wages of a housemaid," I continued, as bold as Corinthian brass.

"Does my niece, does my—ahem!—children's governess, complain of my treatment in my college?" cries the Master.

"My dear Master," I asked, "you don't suppose I would have listened to her complaints, or, at any rate, have repeated them, until now?"

"And why now, Batchelor, I should like to know?" says the Master, pacing up and down his study in a fume, under the portraits of Holy Bonifacius, Bishop Budgeon, and all the defunct bigwigs of the college. "And why now, Batchelor, I should like to know?" says he.

"Because—though after staying with you for three years, and having improved herself greatly, as every woman must in your society, my dear Master, Miss Prior is worth at least fifty guineas a year more than you give her—I would not have had her speak until she had found a better place."

"You mean to say she proposes to go away?"

"A wealthy friend of mine, who was a member of our college by the way, wants a nursery governess, and I have recommended Miss Prior to him, at seventy guineas a year."

"And pray who's the member of my college who will give my niece seventy guineas?" asks the Master, fiercely.

"You remember Lovel, the gentleman-pensioner?"

"The sugar-baking man—the man who took you out of ja . . ?"

"One good turn deserves another," says I, hastily. "I have done as much for some of your family, Sargent!"

The red Master, who had been rustling up and down his study in his gown and bands, stopped in his walk as if I had struck him. He looked at me. He turned redder than ever. He drew his hand over his eyes. "Batchelor," says he, "I ask your pardon. It was I who forgot myself—may heaven forgive me!—forgot how good you have been to my family, to my—ahem!—*humble* family, and—and how devoutly thankful I ought to be for the protection which they have found in you." His voice quite fell as he spoke: and of course any little wrath which I might have felt was disarmed before his contrition. We parted the best friends. He not only shook hands with

me at the study-door, but he actually followed me to the hall-door, and shook hands at his lodge-porch, *sub Jove*, in the quadrangle. Huckles, the tutor (Highlow Huckles we used to call him in our time), and Botts (Trumperian professor), who happened to be passing through the court at the time, stood aghast as they witnessed the phenomenon.

"I say, Batchelor," asks Huckles, "have you been made a marquis by any chance?"

"Why a marquis, Huckles?" I ask.

"Sargent never comes to his lodge-door with any man under a marquis," says Huckles, in a low whisper.

"Or a pretty woman," says that Botts (he *will* have his joke). "Batchelor, my elderly Tiresias, are you turned into a lovely young lady *par hasard?*"

"Get along, you absurd Trumperian professor!" say I. But the circumstance was the talk not only in Compotation Room that evening over our wine, but of the whole college. And further, events happened which made each man look at his neighbour with wonder. For that whole term Sargent did not ask our nobleman Lord Sackville (Lord Wigmore's son) to the lodge. (Lord W.'s father, you know, Duff, was baker to the college.) For that whole term he was rude but twice to Perks, the junior tutor, and then only in a very mild way: and what is more, he gave his niece a present of a gown, of his blessing, of a kiss, and a high character, when she went away;—and promised to put one of her young brothers to school—which promise, I need not say, he faithfully kept: for he has good principles, Sargent has. He is rude: he is ill-bred: he is *bumptious* beyond almost any man I ever knew: he is spoiled not a little by prosperity;—but he is magnanimous: he can own that he has been in the wrong; and oh me! what a quantity of Greek he knows!

Although my late friend the Captain never seemed to do aught but spend the family money, his disreputable presence somehow acted for good in the household. "My dear husband kept our family together," Mrs. Prior said, shaking her lean head under her meagre widow's cap. "Heaven knows how I shall provide for these lambs now he is gone." Indeed, it was not until after the death of that tipsy shepherd that the wolves of the law came down upon the lambs—myself included, who have passed the age of lambhood and mint sauce a long time. They came down upon our fold in Beak Street, I say, and ravaged it. What was I to do? Could I leave

that widow and children in their distress? I was not ignorant of misfortune, and knew how to succour the miserable. Nay, I think, the little excitement attendant upon the seizure of my goods, &c., the insolvent vulgarity of the low persons in possession—with one of whom I was very near coming to a personal encounter—and other incidents which occurred in the bereft household, served to rouse me, and dissipate some of the languor and misery under which I was suffering in consequence of Miss Mulligan's conduct to me. I know I took the late Captain to his final abode. My good friends the printers of the *Museum* took one of his boys into their counting-house. A blue coat and a pair of yellow stockings were procured for Augustus; and seeing the Master's children walking about in Boniface gardens with a glum-looking old wretch of a nurse, I bethought me of proposing to him to take his niece Miss Prior—and, heaven be good to me! never said one word to her uncle about Miss Bellenden and the Academy. I dare say I drew a number of long bows about her. I managed about the bad grammar pretty well, by lamenting that Elizabeth's poor mother had been forced to allow the girl to keep company with ill-educated people: and added, that she could not fail to mend her English in the house of one of the most distinguished scholars in Europe, and one of the best-bred women. I did say so, upon my word, looking that half-bred, stuck-up Mrs. Sargent gravely in the face; and I humbly trust, if that bouncer has been registered against me, the Recording Angel will be pleased to consider that the motive was good, though the statement was unjustifiable. But I don't think it was the compliment: I think it was the temptation of getting a governess for next to nothing that operated upon Madam Sargent. And so Bessy went to her aunt, partook of the bread of dependence, and drank of the cup of humiliation, and ate the pie of humility, and brought up her odious little cousins to the best of her small power, and bowed the head of hypocrisy before the don her uncle, and the pompous little upstart her aunt. *She* the best-bred woman in England, indeed! She, the little vain skinflint!

Bessy's mother was not a little loth to part with the fifty pounds a year which the child brought home from the Academy; but her departure thence was inevitable. Some quarrel had taken place there, about which the girl did not care to talk. Some rudeness had been offered to Miss Bellenden, to which Miss Prior was determined

not to submit: or was it that she wanted to go away from the scenes of her own misery, and to try and forget that Indian captain? Come, fellow-sufferer! Come, child of misfortune, come hither! Here is an old bachelor who will weep with thee tear for tear!

I protest here is Miss Prior coming into the room at last. A pale face, a tawny head of hair combed back, under a black cap: a pair of blue spectacles, as I live! a tight mourning dress, buttoned up to her white throat; a head hung meekly down: such is Miss Prior. She takes my hand when I offer it. She drops me a demure little curtsey, and answers my many questions with humble monosyllabic replies. She appeals constantly to Lady Baker for instruction, or for confirmation of her statements. What! have six years of slavery so changed the frank daring young girl whom I remember in Beak Street? She is taller and stouter than she was. She is awkward and high-shouldered, but surely she has a very fine figure.

"Will Miss Cissy and Master Popham have their teas here or in the schoolroom?" asks Bedford, the butler, of his master. Miss Prior looks appealingly to Lady Baker.

"In the sch——" Lady Baker is beginning.

"Here—here!" bawl out the children. "Much better fun down here: and you'll send us out some fruit and things from dinner, papa!" cries Cissy.

"It's time to dress for dinner," says her ladyship.

"Has the first bell rung?" asks Lovel.

"Yes, the first bell has rung, and grandmamma must go, for it always takes her a precious long time to dress for dinner!" cries Pop. And, indeed, on looking at Lady Baker, the connoisseur might perceive that her ladyship was a highly composite person, whose charms required very much care and arrangement. There are some cracked old houses where the painters and plumbers and puttyers are always at work.

"Have the goodness to ring the bell!" she says, in a majestic manner, to Miss Prior, though I think Lady Baker herself was nearest.

I sprang towards the bell myself, and my hand meets Elizabeth's there, who was obeying her ladyship's summons, and who retreats, making me the demurest curtsey. At the summons, enter Bedford the butler (he was an old friend of mine too) and young Buttons, the page under that butler.

Lady Baker points to a heap of articles on a table, and says to Bedford: "If you please, Bedford, tell my man to give those things to Pincott, my maid, to be taken to my room."

"Shall not I take them up, dear Lady Baker?" says Miss Prior.

But Bedford, looking at his subordinate, says: "Thomas! tell Bulkeley, her ladyship's man, to take her ladyship's things, and give them to her ladyship's maid." There was a tone of sarcasm, even of parody, in Monsieur Bedford's voice; but his manner was profoundly grave and respectful. Drawing up her person, and making a motion, I don't know whether of politeness or defiance, exit Lady Baker, followed by page, bearing bandboxes, shawls, paper parcels, parasols —I know not what. Dear Popham stands on his head as grandmamma leaves the room. "Don't be vulgar!" cries little Cissy (the dear child is always acting as a little Mentor to her brother). "I shall, if I like," says Pop; and he makes faces at her.

"You know your room, Batch?" asks the master of the house.

"Mr. Batchelor's old room—always has the blue room," says Bedford, looking very kindly at me.

"Give us," cries Lovel, "a bottle of that Sau——"

"——terne Mr. Batchelor used to like. Château Yquem. All right!" says Mr. Bedford. "How will you have the turbot done you brought down?—Dutch sauce?—Make lobster into salad? Mr. Bonnington likes lobster-salad," says Bedford. Pop is winding up the butler's back at this time. It is evident Mr. Bedford is a privileged person in the family. As he had entered it on my nomination several years ago, and had been ever since the faithful valet, butler, and major-domo of Lovel, Bedford and I were always good friends when we met.

"By the way, Bedford, why wasn't the barouche sent for me to the bridge?" cries Lovel. "I had to walk all the way home, with a bat and stumps for Pop, with the basket of fish, and that bandbox with my lady's——"

"He—he!" grins Bedford.

"'He—he!' Confound you, why do you stand grinning there? Why didn't I have the carriage, I say?" bawls the master of the house.

"*You* know, sir," says Bedford. "*She* had the carriage." And he indicated the door through which Lady Baker had just retreated.

"Then why didn't I have the phaeton?" asks Bedford's master.

"Your Ma and Mr. Bonnington had the phaeton."

"And why shouldn't they, pray? Mr. Bonnington is lame: I'm at my business all day. I should like to know why they *shouldn't* have the phaeton?" says Lovel, appealing to me. As we had been sitting talking together previous to Miss Prior's appearance, Lady Baker had said to Lovel, "Your mother and Mr. Bonnington are coming to dinner *of course*, Frederick?" and Lovel had said, "Of course they are," with a peevish bluster, whereof I now began to understand the meaning. The fact was, these two women were fighting for the possession of this child; but who was the Solomon to say which should have him? Not I. *Nenni.* I put my oar in no man's boat. Give me an easy life, my dear friends, and row me gently over.

"You had better go and dress," says Bedford sternly, looking at his master; "the first bell has rung this quarter of an hour. Will you have some '34?"

Lovel started up; he looked at the clock. "You are all ready, Batch, I see. I hope you are going to stay some time, ain't you?" And he disappeared to array himself in his sables and starch. I was thus alone with Miss Prior and her young charges, who resumed straightway their infantine gambols and quarrels.

"My dear Bessy!" I cry, holding out both hands, "I am heartily glad to——"

"Ne m'appelez que de mon nom paternel devant tout ce monde s'il vous plait, mon cher ami, mon bon protecteur!" she says, hastily, in very good French, folding her hands and making a curtsey.

"Oui, oui, oui! Parlez-vous Français? J'aime, tu aimes, il aime!" cries out dear Master Popham. "What are you talking about? Here's the phaeton!" and the young innocent dashes through the open window on to the lawn, whither he is followed by his sister, and where we see the carriage containing Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington rolling over the smooth walk.

Bessy advances towards me, and gives me readily enough now the hand she had refused anon.

"I never thought you would have refused it, Bessy," said I.

"Refuse it to the best friend I ever had!" she says, pressing my hand. "Ah, dear Mr. Batchelor, what an ungrateful wretch I should be, if I did!"

"Let me see your eyes. Why do you wear spectacles? You

BESSY'S SPECTACLES.

never wore them in Beak Street," I say. You see I was very fond of the child. She had wound herself around me in a thousand fond ways. Owing to a certain Person's conduct my heart may be a ruin—a Persepolis, sir—a perfect Tadmor. But what then? May not a traveller rest under its shattered columns? May not an Arab maid repose there till the morning dawns and the caravan passes on? Yes, my heart is a Palmyra, and once a Queen inhabited me (O Zenobia! Zenobia! to think thou should'st have been led away captive by an O'D—!) Now, I am alone, alone in the solitary wilderness. Nevertheless, if a stranger comes to me I have a spring for his weary feet, I will give him the shelter of my shade. Rest thy cheek awhile, young maiden, on my marble—then go thy ways and leave me.

This I thought, or something to this effect, as in reply to my remark, "Let me see your eyes," Bessy took off her spectacles, and I took them up and looked at her. Why didn't I say to her, "My dear brave Elizabeth! as I look in your face, I see you have had an awful deal of suffering. Your eyes are inscrutably sad. We who are initiated, know the members of our Community of Sorrow. We have both been wrecked in different ships, and been cast on this shore. Let us go hand-in-hand, and find a cave and a shelter somewhere together?" I say, why didn't I say this to her? She would have come, I feel sure she would. We would have been semi-attached as it were. We would have locked up that room in either heart where the skeleton was, and said nothing about it, and pulled down the party-wall and taken our mild tea in the garden. I live in Pump Court now. It would have been better than this dingy loneliness and a snuffy laundress who bullies me. But for Bessy? Well—well, perhaps better for her too.

I remember these thoughts rushing through my mind whilst I held the spectacles. What a number of other things too? I remember two canaries making a tremendous concert in their cage. I remember the voices of the two children quarrelling on the lawn, the sound of the carriage-wheels grinding over the gravel; and then of a little old familiar cracked voice in my ear, with a "La, Mr. Batchelor! are *you* here?" And a sly face looks up at me from under an old bonnet.

"It is mamma," says Bessy.

"And I'm come to tea with Elizabeth and the dear children; and while you are at dinner, dear Mr. Batchelor, thankful—thankful for

all mercies! And, dear me! here is Mrs. Bonnington, I do declare! Dear madam, how well you look—not twenty, I declare! And dear Mr. Bonnington! Oh, sir! let me—let me, I *must* press your hand. What a sermon last Sunday! All Putney was in tears!"

And the little woman, flinging out her lean arms, seizes portly Mr. Bonnington's fat hand: as he and kind Mrs. Bonnington enter at the open casement. The little woman seems inclined to do the honours of the house. "And won't you go upstairs, and put on your cap? Dear me, what a lovely ribbon! How blue does become Mrs. Bonnington! I always say so to Elizabeth," she cries, peeping into a little packet which Mrs. Bonnington bears in her hand. After exchanging friendly words and greetings with me, that lady retires to put the lovely cap on, followed by her little jackal of an aide-de-camp. The portly clergyman surveys his pleased person in the spacious mirror. "Your things are in your old room—like to go in, and brush up a bit?" whispers Bedford to me. I am obliged to go, you see, though, for my part, I had thought, until Bedford spoke, that the ride on the top of the Putney omnibus had left me without any need of brushing; having aired my clothes, and given my young cheek a fresh and agreeable bloom.

My old room, as Bedford calls it, was that snug apartment communicating by double doors with the drawing-room, and whence you can walk on to the lawn out of the windows.

"Here's your books, here's your writing-paper," says Bedford, leading the way into the chamber. "Does sore eyes good to see *you* down here again, sir. You may smoke now. Clarence Baker smokes when he comes. Go and get some of that wine you like for dinner." And the good fellow's eyes beam kindness upon me as he nods his head, and departs to superintend the duties of his table. Of course you understand that this Bedford was my young printer's boy of former days. What a queer fellow! I had not only been kind to him, but he was grateful.

## CHAPTER III.

### IN WHICH I PLAY THE SPY.

THE room to which Bedford conducted me I hold to be the very pleasantest chamber in all the mansion of Shrublands. To lie on that comfortable, cool bachelor's bed there, and see the birds hopping about on the lawn; to peep out of the French window at early morning, inhale the sweet air, mark the dewy bloom on the grass, listen to the little warblers performing their chorus, step forth in your dressing-gown and slippers, pick a strawberry from the bed, or an apricot in its season; blow one, two, three, just half-a-dozen puffs of a cigarette; hear the venerable towers of Putney toll the hour of six (three hours from breakfast, by consequence), and pop back into bed again with a favourite novel, or review, to set you off (you see I am not malicious, or I could easily insert here the name of some twaddler against whom I have a grudgekin): to pop back into bed again, I say, with a book

which sets you off into that dear, invaluable second sleep, by which health, spirits, appetite are so prodigiously improved:—all these I hold to be most cheerful and harmless pleasures, and have partaken of them often at Shrublands with a grateful heart. That heart may have had its griefs, but is yet susceptible of enjoyment and consolation. That bosom may have been lacerated, but is not therefore and henceforward a stranger to comfort. After a certain affair in Dublin —nay, very soon after, three months after—I recollect remarking to myself: "Well, thank my stars, I still have a relish for '34 claret." Once at Shrublands I heard steps pacing overhead at night, and the feeble but continued wail of an infant. I wakened from my sleep, was sulky, but turned and slept again. Biddlecombe the barrister I knew was the occupant of the upper chamber. He came down the next morning looking wretchedly yellow about the cheeks, and livid round the eyes. His teething infant had kept him on the march all night, and Mrs. Biddlecombe, I am told, scolds him frightfully besides. He munched a shred of toast, and was off by the omnibus to chambers. I chipped a second egg; I may have tried one or two other nice little things on the table (Strasbourg pâté I know I never can resist, and am convinced it is perfectly wholesome). I could see my own sweet face in the mirror opposite, and my gills were as rosy as any broiled salmon. "Well—well!" I thought, as the barrister disappeared on the roof of the coach, "he has *domus* and *placens uxor*—but is she *placens*? *Placetne* to walk about all night with a roaring baby? Is it pleasing to go to bed after a long hard day's work, and have your wife nagnagging you because she has not been invited to the Lady Chancelloress's *soirée*, or what not? Suppose the Glorvina whom you loved so had been yours? Her eyebrows looked as if they could scowl, her eyes as if they could flash with anger. Remember what a slap she gave the little knife-boy for upsetting the butter-boat over her tabinet. Suppose *parvulus aulâ*, a little Batchelor your son, who had the toothache all night in your bedroom?" These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind as I helped myself to the comfortable meal before me. "I say, what a lot of muffins you're eating!" cried innocent Master Lovel. Now the married, the wealthy, the prosperous Biddlecombe only took his wretched scrap of dry toast. "Aha!" you say, "this man is consoling himself after his misfortune." O churl! and do you grudge me consolation? "Thank you, dear Miss Prior. Another cup, and plenty

cream, if you please." Of course, Lady Baker was not at table ıen I said, "Dear Miss Prior," at breakfast. Before her ladyship I s as mum as a mouse. Elizabeth found occasion to whisper to me ring the day, in her demure way: "This is a very rare occasion. dy B—— never allows me to breakfast alone with Mr. Lovel, but s taken her extra nap, I suppose, because you and Mr. and rs. Biddlecombe were here."

Now it may be that one of the double doors of the room which I ıabited was occasionally open, and that Mr. Batchelor's eyes and rs are uncommonly quick, and note a number of things which less servant persons would never regard or discover; but out of this ɔm, which I occupied for some few days, now and subsequently, I ɔked forth as from a little ambush upon the proceedings of the ıuse, and got a queer little insight into the history and characters of e personages round about me. The two grandmothers of Lovel's ildren were domineering over that easy gentleman, as women—not andmothers merely, but sisters, wives, aunts, daughters, when the ance is given them—will domineer. Ah! Glorvina, what a grey ıre you might have become had you chosen Mr. Batchelor for your ınsort! (But this I only remark with a parenthetic sigh.) The two ildren had taken each the side of a grandmamma, and whilst aster Pop was declared by his maternal grandmother to be a Baker l over, and taught to despise sugar-baking and trade, little Cecilia ıs Mrs. Bonnington's favourite, repeated Watts's hymns with fervent ecocity; declared that she would marry none but a clergyman; eached infantine sermons to her brother and maid about world- ıess; and somewhat wearied me, if the truth must be told, by the tense self-respect with which she regarded her own virtues. The d ladies had that love for each other, which one may imagine that eir relative positions would engender. Over the bleeding and help- ss bodies of Lovel and his worthy and kind stepfather, Mr. Bon- ngton, they skirmished, and fired shots at each other. Lady B—— ɔuld give hints about second marriages, and second families, and so rth, which of course made Mrs. Bonnington wince. Mrs. B—— ıd the better of Lady Baker, in consequence of the latter's notorious ɛcuniary irregularities. *She* had never had recourse to her son's ırse, she could thank heaven. She was not afraid of meeting any ıdesman in Putney or London: she had never been ordered out of e house in the late Cecilia's lifetime: *she* could go to Boulogne and

enjoy the *fresh air* there. This was the terrific whip she had over Baker. Lady B——, I regret to say, in consequence of the failure of remittances, had been locked up in prison, just at a time when she was in a state of violent quarrel with her late daughter, and good Mr. Bonnington had helped her out of durance. How did I know this? Bedford, Lovel's factotum, told me: and how the old ladies were fighting like two cats.

There was one point on which the two ladies agreed. A very wealthy widower, young still, good-looking, and good-tempered, we know can sometimes find a dear woman to console his loneliness, and protect his motherless children. From the neighbouring Heath, from Wimbledon, Roehampton, Barnes, Mortlake, Richmond, Esher, Walton, Windsor, nay, Reading, Bath, Exeter, and Penzance itself, or from any other quarter of Britain, over which your fancy may please to travel, families would have come ready with dear young girls to take charge of that man's future happiness; but it is a fact that these two dragons kept all women off from their ward. An unmarried woman, with decent good looks, was scarce ever allowed to enter Shrublands gate. If such an one appeared, Lovel's two mothers sallied out, and crunched her hapless bones. Once or twice he dared to dine with his neighbours, but the ladies led him such a life that the poor creature gave up the practice, and faintly announced his preference for home. "My dear Batch," says he, "what do I care for the dinners of the people round about? Has any one of them got a better cook or better wine than mine? When I come home from business, it is an intolerable nuisance to have to dress and go out seven or eight miles to cold *entrées*, and loaded claret, and sweet port. I can't stand it, sir. I *won't* stand it" (and he stamps his foot in a resolute manner). "Give me an easy life, a wine-merchant I can trust, and my own friends, by my own fireside. Shall we have some more? We can manage another bottle between us three, Mr. Bonnington?"

"Well," says Mr. Bonnington, winking at the ruby goblet, "I am sure I have no objection, Frederick, to another bo——"

"Coffee is served, sir," cries Bedford, entering.

"Well—well, perhaps we have had enough," says worthy Bonnington.

"We *have* had enough; we all drink too much," says Lovel, briskly. "Come in to coffee."

We go to the drawing-room. Fred and I, and the two ladies, sit down to a rubber, whilst Miss Prior plays a piece of Beethoven to a slight warbling accompaniment from Mr. Bonnington's handsome nose, who has fallen asleep over the newspaper. During our play, Bessy glides out of the room—a grey shadow. Bonnington wakens up when the tray is brought in. Lady Baker likes that good old custom: it was always the fashion at the Castle, and she takes a good glass of negus too; and so do we all; and the conversation is pretty merry, and Fred Lovel hopes I shall sleep better to-night, and is very facetious about poor Biddlecombe, and the way in which that eminent Q.C. is henpecked by his wife.

From my bachelor's room, then, on the ground-floor; or from my solitary walks in the garden, whence I could oversee many things in the house; or from Bedford's communications to me, which were very friendly, curious, and unreserved; or from my own observation, which I promise you can see as far into the millstones of life as most folks', I grew to find the mysteries of Shrublands no longer mysterious to me; and, like another *Diable Boiteux*, had the roofs of a pretty number of the Shrublands rooms taken off for me.

For instance, on that very first day of my stay, whilst the family were attiring themselves for dinner, I chanced to find two secret cupboards of the house unlocked, and the contents unveiled to me. Pinhorn, the children's maid, a giddy little flirting thing in a pink ribbon, brought some articles of the toilette into my worship's apartment, and as she retired did not shut the door behind her. I might have thought that pert little head had never been made to ache by any care; but ah! black care sits behind the horseman as Horace remarks, and not only behind the horseman, but behind the footman; and not only on the footman, but on the buxom shoulders of the lady's-maid. So with Pinhorn. You surely have remarked respecting domestic servants that they address you in a tone utterly affected and unnatural—adopting, when they are amongst each other, voices and gestures entirely different to those which their employers see and hear. Now, this little Pinhorn, in her occasional intercourse with your humble servant, had a brisk, quick, fluttering toss of the head, and a frisky manner, no doubt capable of charming some persons. As for me, ancillary allurements have, I own, had but small temptations. If Venus brought me a bedroom candle and a jug of hot water, I should give her sixpence, and no more. Having, you

see, given my all to one wom——Psha! never mind *that* old story.—Well, I dare say this little creature may have been a flirt, but I took no more notice of her than if she had been a coal-scuttle.

Now, suppose she *was* a flirt. Suppose, under a mask of levity, she hid a profound sorrow. Do you suppose she was the first woman who ever has done so? Do you suppose because she has fifteen pounds a year, her tea, sugar, and beer, and told fibs to her masters and mistresses, she had not a heart? She went out of the room, absolutely coaxing and leering at me as she departed, with a great counterpane over her arm; but in the next apartment I heard her voice quite changed, and another changed voice too—though not so much altered—interrogating her. My friend Dick Bedford's voice, in addressing those whom Fortune had pleased to make his superiors, was gruff and brief. He seemed to be anxious to deliver himself of his speech to you as quickly as possible; and his tone always seemed to hint, "There—there is my message, and I have delivered it; but you know perfectly well that I am as good as you." And so he was, and so I always admitted: so even the trembling, believing, flustering, suspicious Lady Baker herself admitted, when she came into communication with this man. I have thought of this little Dick as of Swift at Sheen hard by, with Sir William Temple: or Spartacus when he was as yet the servant of the fortunate Roman gentleman who owned him. Now if Dick was intelligent, obedient, useful, only not rebellious, with his superiors, I should fancy that amongst his equals he was by no means pleasant company, and that most of them hated him for his arrogance, his honesty, and his scorn of them all.

But women do not always hate a man for scorning and despising them. Women do not revolt at the rudeness and arrogance of us their natural superiors. Women, if properly trained, come down to heel at the master's bidding, and lick the hand that has been often raised to hit them. I do not say the brave little Dick Bedford ever raised an actual hand to this poor serving-girl, but his tongue whipped her, his behaviour trampled on her, and she cried, and came to him whenever he lifted a finger. Psha! Don't tell *me*. If you want a quiet, contented, orderly home, and things comfortable about you, that is the way you must manage your women.

Well, Bedford happens to be in the next room. It is the morning-room at Shrublands. You enter the dining-room from it,

and they are in the habit of laying out the dessert there, before taking it in for dinner. Bedford is laying out his dessert as Pinhorn enters from my chamber, and he begins upon her with a sarcastic sort of grunt, and a "Ho! suppose you've been making up to B., have you?"

"Oh, Mr. Bedford, *you* know very well who it is I cares for!" she says, with a sigh.

"Bother!" Mr. B. remarks.

"Well, Richard, then!" (here she weeps.)

"Leave go my 'and!—leave go my a-hand, I say!" (What *could* she have been doing to cause this exclamation?)

"Oh, Richard, it's not your *'and* I want—it's your ah-ah-art, Richard!"

"Mary Pinhorn," exclaims the other, "what's the use of going on with this game? You know we couldn't be a-happy together—you know your ideers ain't no good, Mary. It ain't your fault. *I* don't blame you for it, my dear. Some people are born clever, some are born tall: I ain't tall."

"Oh, you're tall enough for me, Richard!"

Here Richard again found occasion to cry out: "*Don't*, I say! Suppose Baker was to come in and find you squeezing of my hand in this way? I say, some people are born with big brains, Miss Pinhorn, and some with big figures. Look at that ass, Bulkeley, Lady B.'s man! He is as big as a Life-guardsman, and he has no more education, nor no more ideas, than the beef he feeds on."

"La! Richard, whathever do you mean?"

"Pooh! How should *you* know what I mean? Lay them books straight. Put the volumes together, stupid! and the papers, and get the table ready for nursery tea, and don't go on there mopping your eyes, and making a fool of yourself, Mary Pinhorn!"

"Oh, your heart is a stone—a stone—a stone!" cries Mary, in a burst of tears. "And I wish it was hung round my neck, and I was at the bottom of the well, and—there's the hupstairs bell!" with which signal I suppose Mary disappeared, for I only heard a sort of grunt from Mr. Bedford; then the clatter of a dish or two, the wheeling of chairs and furniture, and then came a brief silence, which lasted until the entry of Dick's subordinate, Buttons, who laid the table for the children's and Miss Prior's tea.

So here was an old story told over again. Here was love

unrequited, and a little passionate heart wounded and unhappy. My poor little Mary! As I am a sinner, I will give thee a crown when I go away, and not a couple of shillings, as my wont has been. Five shillings will not console thee much, but they will console thee a little. Thou wilt not imagine that I bribe thee with any privy thought of evil? Away! *Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück—ich habe—geliebt!*

At this juncture I suppose Mrs. Prior must have entered the apartment, for though I could not hear her noiseless step, her little cracked voice came pretty clearly to me with a "Good afternoon, Mr. Bedford! Oh, dear me! what a many—many years we have been acquainted. To think of the pretty little printer's boy who used to come to Mr. Batchelor, and see you grown such a fine man!"

*Bedford.*—"How? I'm only five foot four."

*Mrs. P.*—"But such a fine figure, Bedford! You are—now indeed you are! Well, you are strong and I am weak. You are well, and I am weary and faint."

*Bedford.*—"The tea's a-coming directly, Mrs. Prior."

*Mrs. P.*—"Could you give me a glass of water first—and perhaps a little sherry in it, please. Oh, thank you. How good it is! How it revives a poor old wretch!—and your cough, Bedford? How is your cough? I have brought you some lozenges for it—some of Sir Henry Halford's own prescribing for my dear husband, and ——"

*Bedford* (abruptly).—"I must go—never mind the cough now, Mrs. P."

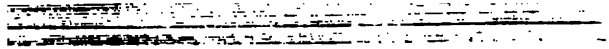
*Mrs. Prior.*—"What's here? almonds and raisins, macaroons, preserved apricots, biscuits for dessert—and—la bless the man! how you sta—artled me!"

*Bedford.*—"DON'T! Mrs. Prior: I beg and implore of you, keep your 'ands out of the dessert. I can't stand it. I *must* tell the governor if this game goes on."

*Mrs. P.*—"Ah! Mr. Bedford, it is for my poor—poor child at home: the doctor recommended her apricots. Ay, indeed, dear Bedford; he did, for her poor chest!"

*Bedford.*—"And I'm blest if you haven't been at the sherry-bottle again! Oh, Mrs. P., you drive me wild—you do. I can't see Lovel put upon in this way. You know it's only last week I whopped the boy for stealing the sherry, and 'twas you done it."

"Where the Sugar Goes."



*Mrs. Prior* (passionately).—"For a sick child, Bedford. What won't a mother do for her sick child?"

*Bedford.*—"Your children's always sick. You're always taking things for 'em. I tell you, by the laws, I won't and mustn't stand it, Mrs. P."

*Mrs. Prior* (with much spirit).—"Go and tell your master, Bedford! Go and tell tales of me, sir. Go and have me dismissed out of this house. Go and have my daughter dismissed out of this house, and her poor mother brought to disgrace."

*Bedford.*—"Mrs. Prior—Mrs. Prior! you *have* been a-taking the sherry. A glass I don't mind: but you've been a-bringing that bottle again."

*Mrs. P.* (whimpering).—"It's for Charlotte, Bedford! my poor delicate angel of a Shatty! she's ordered it, indeed she is!"

*Bedford.*—"Confound your Shatty! I can't stand it, I mustn't, and won't, Mrs. P.!"

Here a noise and clatter of other persons arriving interrupted the conversation between Lovel's major-domo and the mother of the children's governess, and I presently heard master Pop's voice saying, "You're going to tea with us, Mrs. Prior?"

*Mrs. P.*—"Your kind dear grandmammas have asked me, dear Master Popham."

*Pop.*—"But you'd like to go to dinner best, wouldn't you? I dare say you have doosid bad dinners at your house. Haven't you, Mrs. Prior?"

*Cissy.*—"Don't say doosid. It's a naughty word, Popham!"

*Pop.*—"I *will* say doosid. Doo-oo-oosid! There! And I'll say worse words too, if I please, and you hold *your* tongue. What's there for tea? jam for tea? strawberries for tea? muffins for tea? That's it: strawberries and muffins for tea. And we'll go in to dessert besides: that's prime. I say, Miss Prior?"

*Miss Prior.*—"What do you say, Popham?"

*Pop.*—"Shouldn't you like to go in to dessert?—there's lots of good things there,—and have wine. Only when grandmamma tells her story about—about my grandfather and King George the what-d'ye-call-'im: King George the Fourth——"

*Cis.*—"Ascended the throne, 1820; died at Windsor, 1830."

*Pop.*—"Bother Windsor! Well, when she tells that story, I can tell you *that* ain't very good fun."

*Cis.*—"And it's rude of you to speak in that way of your grandmamma, Pop!"

*Pop.*—"And you'll hold *your* tongue, Miss! And I shall speak as I like. And I'm a man, and I don't want any of your stuff and nonsense. I say, Mary, give us the marmalade!"

*Cis.*—"You have had plenty to eat, and boys oughtn't to have so much."

*Pop.*—"Boys may have what they like. Boys can eat twice as much as women. There, I don't want any more. Anybody may have the rest."

*Mrs. Prior.*—"What nice marmalade! I know some children, my dears, who——"

*Miss P.* (imploringly).—"Mamma, I beseech you——"

*Mrs. P.*—"I know three dear children who very—very seldom have nice marmalade and delicious cake."

*Pop.*—"I know whom you mean: you mean Augustus, and Frederick, and Fanny—your children? Well, they shall have marmalade and cake."

*Cis.*—"Oh, yes, I will give them all mine."

*Pop.* (who speaks, I think, as if his mouth was full).—"I won't give 'em mine: but they can have another pot, you know. You have always got a basket with you; you know you have, Mrs. Prior. You had it the day you took the cold fowl."

*Mrs. P.*—"For the poor blind black man! Oh, how thankful he was to his dear young benefactors! He is a man and a brother, and to help him was most kind of you, dear Master Popham!"

*Pop.*—"That black beggar my brother? He ain't my brother."

*Mrs. P.*—"No, dears, you have both the most lovely complexions in the world."

*Pop.*—"Bother complexions! I say, Mary, another pot of marmalade."

*Mary.*—"I don't know, Master Pop——"

*Pop.*—"I *will* have it, I say. If you don't, I'll smash everything, I will."

*Cis.*—"Oh, you naughty, rude boy!"

*Pop.*—"Hold your tongue, stupid! I will have it, I say."

*Mrs. P.*—"Do humour him, Mary, please. And I'm sure my dear children at home will be better for it."

*Pop.*—"There's your basket. Now put this cake in, and this bit

f butter, and this sugar on the top of the butter. Hurray! hurray! )h, what jolly fun! Here's some cake—no, I think I'll keep that; nd, Mrs. Prior, tell Gus, and Fanny, and Fred, I sent it to 'em, and hey shall never want for anything as long as Frederick Popham laker Lovel, Esquire, can give it them. Did Gus like my gray great-oat that I didn't want?"

*Miss P.*—"You did not give him your new great-coat?"

*Pop.*—"It was beastly ugly, and I did give it him; and I'll give im this if I choose. And don't you speak to me; I'm going to chool, and I ain't going to have no governesses soon."

*Mrs. Prior.*—"Ah, dear child! what a nice coat it is; and how ell my poor boy looks in it!"

*Miss Prior.*—"Mother, mother! I implore you—mother——!"

*Mr. Lovel enters.*—"So the children at high tea! How d'ye do, Irs. Prior? I think we shall be able to manage that little matter for our second boy, Mrs. Prior."

*Mrs. Prior.*—"Heaven bless you,—bless you, my dear, kind enefactor! Don't prevent me, Elizabeth: I *must* kiss his hand. There!"

And here the second bell rings, and I enter the morning-room, nd can see Mrs. Prior's great basket popped cunningly under the able-cloth. Her basket?—her *porte-manteau*, her *porte-bouteille*, her *orte-gâteau*, her *porte-pantalon*, her *porte-butin* in general. Thus I ould see that every day Mrs. Prior visited Shrublands she gleaned eedily of the harvest. Well, Boaz was rich, and this ruthless Ruth as hungry and poor.

At the welcome summons of the second bell, Mr. and Mrs. Bonington also made their appearance; the latter in the new cap which Irs. Prior had admired, and which she saluted with a nod of smiling ecognition: "Dear madam, it *is* lovely—I told you it was," whispers Irs. P., and the wearer of the blue ribbons turned her bonny, good-atured face towards the looking-glass, and I hope saw no reason to loubt Mrs. Prior's sincerity. As for Bonnington, I could perceive hat he had been taking a little nap before dinner,—a practice by hich the appetite is improved, I think, and the intellect prepared for he bland prandial conversation.

"Have the children been quite good?" asks papa, of the overness.

"There are worse children, sir," says Miss Prior, meekly.

"Make haste and have your dinner; we are coming in to dessert!" cries Pop.

"You would not have us go to dine without your grandmother?" papa asks. Dine without Lady Baker, indeed! I should have liked to see him go to dinner without Lady Baker.

Pending her ladyship's arrival, papa and Mr. Bonnington walk to the open window, and gaze on the lawn and the towers of Putney rising over the wall.

"Ah, my good Mrs. Prior," cries Mrs. Bonnington, "those grandchildren of mine are sadly spoiled."

"Not by *you*, dear madam," says Mrs. Prior, with a look of commiseration. "Your dear children at home are, I am sure, perfect models of goodness. Is Master Edward well, ma'am? and Master Robert, and Master Richard, and dear funny little Master William? Ah, what blessings those children are to you! If a certain wilful little nephew of theirs took after them!"

"The little naughty wretch!" cried Mrs. Bonnington; "do you know, Prior, my grandson Frederick—(I don't know why they call him Popham in this house, or why he should be ashamed of his father's name)—do you know that Popham spilt the ink over my dear husband's bands, which he keeps in his great dictionary, and fought with my Richard, who is three years older than Popham, and actually beat his own uncle!"

"Gracious goodness!" I cried; "you don't mean to say, ma'am, that Pop has been laying violent hands upon his venerable relative?" I feel ever so gentle a pull at my coat. Was it Miss Prior who warned me not to indulge in the sarcastic method with good Mrs. Bonnington?

"I don't know why you call my poor child a venerable relative," Mrs. B. remarks. "I know that Popham was very rude to him; and then Robert came to his brother, and that graceless little Popham took a stick, and my husband came out, and do you know Popham Lovel actually kicked Mr. Bonnington on the shins, and butted him like a little naughty ram; and if you think such conduct is a subject for ridicule—I *don't*, Mr. Batchelor."

"My dear—dear lady!" I cried, seizing her hand; for she was going to cry, and in woman's eye the unanswerable tear always raises a deuce of a commotion in my mind. "I would not for the world say a word that should willingly vex you; and as for Popham, I give

you my honour, I think nothing would do that child so much good as a good whipping."

"He is spoiled, madam; we know by *whom*," says Mrs. Prior. "Dear Lady Baker! how that red does become your ladyship." In fact, Lady B. sailed in at this juncture, arrayed in ribbons of scarlet; with many brooches, bangles, and other gimcracks ornamenting her plenteous person. And now her ladyship having arrived, Bedford announced that dinner was served, and Lovel gave his mother-in-law an arm, whilst I offered mine to Mrs. Bonnington to lead her to the adjoining dining-room. And the pacable kind soul speedily made peace with me. And we ate and drank of Lovel's best. And Lady Baker told us her celebrated anecdote of George the Fourth's compliment to her late dear husband, Sir Popham, when his Majesty visited Ireland. Mrs. Prior and her basket were gone when we repaired to the drawing-room: having been hunting all day, the hungry mother had returned with her prey to her wide-mouthed birdikins. Elizabeth looked very pale and handsome, reading at her lamp. And whist and the little tray finished the second day at Shrublands.

I paced the moonlit walk alone when the family had gone to rest; and smoked my cigar under the tranquil stars. I had been some thirty hours in the house, and what a queer little drama was unfolding itself before me! What struggles and passions were going on here—what *certamina* and *motus animorum!* Here was Lovel, this willing horse; and what a crowd of relations, what a heap of luggage had the honest fellow to carry! How that little Mrs. Prior was working, and scheming, and tacking, and flattering, and fawning, and plundering, to be sure! And that serene Elizabeth, with what consummate skill, art, and prudence, had she to act, to keep her place with two such rivals reigning over her. And Elizabeth not only kept her place, but she actually was liked by those two women! Why, Elizabeth Prior, my wonder and respect for thee increase with every hour during which I contemplate thy character! How is it that you live with those lionesses, and are not torn to pieces? What sops of flattery do you cast to them to appease them? Perhaps I do not think my Elizabeth brings up her two children very well, and, indeed, have seldom become acquainted with young people more odious. But is the fault hers, or is it Fortune's spite? How, with these two grandmothers spoiling the children alternately, can the governess do better than she does? How

has she managed to lull their natural jealousy? I will work out that intricate problem, that I will, ere many days are over. And there are other mysteries which I perceive. There is poor Mary breaking her heart for the butler. That butler, why does he connive at the rogueries of Mrs. Prior? Ha! herein lies a mystery too; and I vow I will penetrate it ere long. So saying, I fling away the butt-end of the fragrant companion of my solitude, and enter into my room by the open French window just as Bedford walks in at the door. I had heard the voice of that worthy domestic warbling a grave melody from his pantry window as I paced the lawn. When the family goes to rest, Bedford passes a couple of hours in study in his pantry, perusing the newspapers and the new works, and forming his opinion on books and politics. Indeed I have reason to believe that the letters in the *Putney Herald and Mortlake Monitor*, signed "A Voice from the Basement," were Mr. Bedford's composition.

"Come to see all safe for the night, sir, and the windows closed before you turn in," Mr. Dick remarks. "Best not leave 'em open, even if you are asleep inside—catch cold—many bad people about. Remember Bromley murder!—Enter at French windows—you cry out—cut your throat—and there's a fine paragraph for papers next morning!"

"What a good voice you have, Bedford," I say; "I heard you warbling just now—a famous bass, on my word!"

"Always fond of music—sing when I'm cleaning my plate—learned in Old Beak Street. *She* used to teach me," and he points towards the upper floors.

"What a little chap you were then!—when you came for my proofs for the *Museum*," I remark.

"I ain't a very big one now, sir; but it ain't the big ones that do the best work," remarks the butler.

"I remember Miss Prior saying that you were as old as she was."

"Hm! and I scarce came up to her—eh—elbow." (Bedford had constantly to do battle with the aspirates. He conquered them, but you could see there was a struggle.)

"And it was Miss Prior taught you to sing?" I say, looking him full in the face.

He dropped his eyes—he could not bear my scrutiny. I knew the whole story now.

"When Mrs. Lovel died at Naples, Miss Prior brought home the children, and you acted as courier to the whole party?"

"Yes, sir," says Bedford. "We had the carriage, and of course poor Mrs. L. was sent home by sea, and I brought home the young ones, and—and the rest of the family. I could say, Avanti! avanti! to the Italian postilions, and ask for des chevaux when we crossed the Halps—the Alps,—I beg your pardon, sir."

"And you used to see the party to their rooms at the inns, and call them up in the morning, and you had a blunderbuss in the rumble to shoot the robbers?"

"Yes," says Bedford.

"And it was a pleasant time?"

"Yes," says Bedford, groaning, and hanging down his miserable head. "Oh, yes, it was a pleasant time."

He turned away; he stamped his foot; he gave a sort of imprecation; he pretended to look at some books, and dust them with a napkin which he carried. I saw the matter at once. "Poor Dick!" says I.

"It's the old—old story," says Dick. "It's you and the Hirish girl over again, sir. I'm only a servant, I know; but I'm a——. Confound it!" And here he stuck his fists into his eyes.

"And this is the reason you allow old Mrs. Prior to steal the sherry and the sugar?" I ask.

"How do you know that?—you remember how she prigged in Beak Street?" asks Bedford, fiercely.

"I overheard you and her just before dinner," I said.

"You had better go and tell Lovel—have me turned out of the house. That's the best thing that can be done," cries Bedford again, fiercely, stamping his feet.

"It is always my custom to do as much mischief as I possibly can, Dick Bedford," I say, with fine irony.

He seizes my hand. "No, you're a trump—everybody knows that; beg pardon, sir; but you see I'm so—so—dash!—miserable, that I hardly know whether I'm walking on my head or my heels."

"You haven't succeeded in touching her heart, then, my poor Dick?" I said.

Dick shook his head. "She has no heart," he said. "If she ever had any, that fellar in India took it away with him. She don't care for anybody alive. She likes me as well as any one. I think she

appreciates me, you see, sir; she can't 'elp it—I'm blest if she can. She knows I am a better man than most of the chaps that come down here,—I am, if I wasn't a servant. If I were only an apothecary—like that grinning jackass who comes here from Barnes in his gig, and wants to marry her—she'd have me. She keeps him on, and encourages him—she can do that cleverly enough. And the old dragon fancies she is fond of him. Psha! Why am I making a fool of myself?—I am only a servant. Mary's good enough for me; *she'll* have me fast enough. I beg your pardon, sir; I am making a fool of myself; I ain't the first, sir. Good-night, sir; hope you'll sleep well." And Dick departs to his pantry and his private cares, and I think, "Here is another victim who is writhing under the merciless arrows of the universal torturer."

"He is a very singular person," Miss Prior remarked to me, as, next day, I happened to be walking on Putney Heath by her side, while her young charges trotted on and quarrelled in the distance. "I wonder where the world will stop next, dear Mr. Batchelor, and how far the march of intellect will proceed! Any one so free, and easy, and cool, as this Mr. Bedford I never saw. When we were abroad with poor Mrs. Lovel, he picked up French and Italian in quite a surprising way. He takes books down from the library now: the most abstruse works—works that *I* couldn't pretend to read, I'm sure. Mr. Bonnington says he has taught himself history, and Horace in Latin, and algebra, and I don't know what besides. He talked to the servants and tradespeople at Naples much better than *I* could, I assure you." And Elizabeth tosses up her head heavenwards, as if she would ask of yonder skies how such a man could possibly be as good as herself.

She stepped along the Heath—slim, stately, healthy, tall—her firm, neat foot treading swiftly over the grass. She wore her blue spectacles, but I think she could have looked at the sun without the glasses and without wincing. That sun was playing with her tawny, wavy ringlets, and scattering gold-dust over them.

"It is wonderful," said I, admiring her, "how these people give themselves airs, and try to imitate their betters!"

"Most extraordinary!" says Bessy. She had not one particle of humour in all her composition. I think Dick Bedford was right; and she had no heart. Well, she had famous lungs, health, appetite, and with these one may get through life not uncomfortably.

"You and Saint Cecilia got on pretty well, Bessy?" I ask.

"Saint who?"

"The late Mrs. L."

"Oh, Mrs. Lovel:—yes. What an odd person you are! I did not understand whom you meant," says Elizabeth the downright.

"Not a good temper, I should think? She and Fred fought?"

"*He* never fought."

"I think a little bird has told me that she was not averse to the admiration of our sex?"

"I don't speak ill of my friends, Mr. Batchelor," replies Elizabeth the prudent.

"You must have difficult work with the two old ladies at Shrublands?"

Bessy shrugs her shoulders. "A little management is necessary in all families," she says. "The ladies are naturally a little jealous one of the other; but they are both of them not unkind to me in the main; and I have to bear no more than other women in my situation. It was not all pleasure at St. Boniface, Mr. Batchelor, with my uncle and aunt. I suppose all governesses have their difficulties; and I must get over mine as best I can, and be thankful for the liberal salary which your kindness procured for me, and which enables me to help my poor mother and my brothers and sisters."

"I suppose you give all your money to her?"

"Nearly all. They must have it; poor mamma has so many mouths to feed."

"And notre petit cœur, Bessy?" I ask, looking in her fresh face. "Have we replaced the Indian officer?"

Another shrug of the shoulders. "I suppose we all get over those follies, Mr. Batchelor. I remember somebody else was in a sad way too,"—and she looks askance at the victim of Glorvina. "*My* folly is dead and buried long ago. I have to work so hard for mamma, and my brothers and sisters, that I have no time for such nonsense."

Here a gentleman in a natty gig, with a high-trotting horse, came spanking towards us over the common, and with my profound knowledge of human nature, I saw at once that the servant by the driver's side was a little doctor's boy, and the gentleman himself was a neat and trim general practitioner.

He stared at me grimly, as he made a bow to Miss Bessy. I saw jealousy and suspicion in his aspect.

"Thank you, dear Mr. Drencher," says Bessy, "for your kindness to mamma and our children. You are going to call at Shrublands? Lady Baker was indisposed this morning. She says when she can't have Dr. Piper, there's nobody like you." And this artful one smiles blandly on Mr. Drencher.

"I have got the workhouse, and a case at Roehampton, and I shall be at Shrublands *about two*, Miss Prior," says that young Doctor, whom Bedford had called a grinning jackass. He laid an eager emphasis on the *two*. Go to! I know what two and two mean as well as most people, Mr. Drencher! Glances of rage he shot at me from out his gig. The serpents of that miserable Æsculapius unwound themselves from his rod, and were gnawing at his swollen heart!

"He has a good practice, Mr. Drencher?" I ask, sly rogue as I am.

"He is very good to mamma and our children. His practice with *them* does not profit him much," says Bessy.

"And I suppose our walk will be over before two o'clock?" remarks that slyboots who is walking with Miss Prior.

"I hope so. Why, it is our dinner-time; and this walk on the Heath does make one so hungry!" cries the governess.

"Bessy Prior," I said, "it is my belief that you no more want spectacles than a cat in the twilight." To which she replied, that I was such a strange, odd man, she really could not understand me.

We were back at Shrublands at two. Of course we must not keep the children's dinner waiting: and of course Mr. Drencher drove up at five minutes past two, with his gig-horse all in a lather. I, who knew the secrets of the house, was amused to see the furious glances which Bedford darted from the sideboard, or as he served the Doctor with cutlets. Drencher, for his part, scowled at me. I, for my part, was easy, witty, pleasant, and I trust profoundly wicked and malicious. I bragged about my aristocratic friends to Lady Baker. I trumped her old-world stories about George the Fourth at Dublin with the latest dandified intelligence I had learned at the club. That the young Doctor should be dazzled and disgusted was, I own, my wish; and I enjoyed his rage as I saw him choking with jealousy over his victuals.

But why was Lady Baker sulky with me? How came it, my fashionable stories had no effect upon that polite matron? Yesterday

at dinner she had been gracious enough: and turning her back upon those poor simple Bonningtons, who knew nothing of the *beau monde* at all, had condescended to address herself specially to me several times with an "I need not tell *you*, Mr. Batchelor, that the Duchess of Dorsetshire's maiden name was De Bobus;" or, "You know very well that the etiquette at the Lord Lieutenant's balls, at Dublin Castle, is for the wives of baronets to"—&c. &c.

Now whence, I say, did it arise that Lady Baker, who had been kind and familiar with me on Sunday, should on Monday turn me a shoulder as cold as that lamb which I offered to carve for the family, and which remained from yesterday's quarter? I had thought of staying but two days at Shrublands. I generally am bored at country-houses. I was going away on the Monday morning, but Lovel, when he and I and the children and Miss Prior breakfasted together before he went to business, pressed me to stay so heartily and sincerely that I agreed, gladly enough, to remain. I could finish a scene or two of my tragedy at my leisure; besides, there were one or two little comedies going on in the house which inspired me with no little curiosity.

Lady Baker growled at me, then, during lunch-time. She addressed herself in whispers and hints to Mr. Drencher. She had in her own man Bulkeley, and bullied him. She desired to know whether she was to have the barouche or not: and when informed that it was at her ladyship's service, said it was a great deal too cold for the open carriage, and that she would have the brougham. When she was told that Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington had impounded the brougham, she said she had no idea of people taking other people's carriages: and when Mr. Bedford remarked that her ladyship had her choice that morning, and had chosen the barouche, she said, "I didn't speak to you, sir; and I will thank you not to address me until you are spoken to!" She made the place so hot that I began to wish I had quitted it.

"And pray, Miss Prior, where is Captain Baker to sleep," she asked, "now that the ground-floor room is engaged?"

Miss Prior meekly said, "Captain Baker would have the pink room."

"The room on my landing-place, without double doors? Impossible! Clarence is always smoking. Clarence will fill the whole house with his smoke. He shall *not* sleep in the pink room. I

expected the ground-floor room for him, which—a—this gentleman persists in not vacating." And the dear creature looked me full in the face.

"This gentleman smokes, too, and is so comfortable where he is, that he proposes to remain there," I say, with a bland smile.

"Haspic of plovers' eggs, sir," says Bedford, handing a dish over my back. And he actually gave me a little dig, and growled, "Go it —give it her!"

"There is a capital inn on the Heath," I continue, peeling one of my opal favourites. "If Captain Baker must smoke, he may have a room there."

"Sir! my son does not live at inns," cries Lady Baker.

"Oh, grandma! don't he though? And wasn't there a row at the 'Star and Garter;' and didn't Pa pay uncle Clarence's bill there, though?"

"Silence, Popham! Little boys should be seen and not heard," says Cissy. "Shouldn't little boys be seen and not heard, Miss Prior?"

"They shouldn't insult their grandmothers. O my Cecilia—Cecilia!" cries Lady Baker, lifting her hand.

"You shan't hit me! I say, you shan't hit me!" roars Pops, starting back, and beginning to square at his enraged ancestress. The scene was growing painful. And there was that rascal of a Bedford choking with suppressed laughter at the sideboard. Bulkeley, her ladyship's man, stood calm as fate; but young Buttons burst out in a guffaw; on which, I assure you, Lady Baker looked as savage as Lady Macbeth.

"Am I to be insulted by my daughter's servants?" cries Lady Baker. "I will leave the house this instant."

"At what hour will your ladyship have the barouche?" says Bedford, with perfect gravity.

If Mr. Drencher had whipped out a lancet and bled Lady B—— on the spot, he would have done her good. I shall draw the curtain over this sad—this humiliating scene. Drop, little curtain! on this absurd little act.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A BLACK SHEEP.

THE being for whom my friend Dick Bedford seemed to have a special contempt and aversion, was Mr. Bulkeley, the tall footman in attendance upon Lovel's dear mother-in-law. One of the causes of Bedford's wrath, the worthy fellow explained to me. In the servants' hall, Bulkeley was habit of speaking in disrespectful and satirical terms of stress, enlarging upon her many foibles, and describing her ıry difficulties to the many *habitués* of that second social circle blands. The hold which Mr. Bulkeley had over his lady lay in unsettled account of wages, which her ladyship was quite disin- to discharge. And, in spite of this insolvency, the footman ıve found his profit in the place, for he continued to hold it ear to year, and to fatten on his earnings, such as they were. y's dignity did not allow her to travel without this huge per-

sonage in her train ; and a great comfort it must have been to her, to reflect that in all the country-houses which she visited (and she would go wherever she could force an invitation), her attendant freely explained himself regarding her peculiarities, and made his brother servants aware of his mistress's embarrassed condition. And yet the woman, whom I suppose no soul alive respected (unless, haply, she herself had a hankering delusion that she was a respectable woman), thought that her position in life forbade her to move abroad without a maid, and this hulking incumbrance in plush ; and never was seen anywhere, in watering-place, country-house, hotel, unless she was so attended.

Between Bedford and Bulkeley, then, there was feud and mutual hatred. Bedford chafed the big man by constant sneers and sarcasms, which penetrated the other's dull hide, and caused him frequently to assert that he would punch Dick's ugly head off. The housekeeper had frequently to interpose, and fling her matronly arms between these men of war ; and perhaps Bedford was forced to be still at times, for Bulkeley was nine inches taller than himself, and was perpetually bragging of his skill and feats as a bruiser. This sultan may also have wished to fling his pocket-handkerchief to Miss Mary Pinhorn, who, though she loved Bedford's wit and cleverness, might also be not insensible to the magnificent chest, calves, whiskers, of Mr. Bulkeley. On this delicate subject, however, I can't speak. The men hated each other. You have, no doubt, remarked in your experience of life, that when men *do* hate each other, about a woman, or some other cause, the real reason is never assigned. You say, "The conduct of such and such a man to his grandmother—his behaviour in selling that horse to Benson—his manner of brushing his hair down the middle"—or what you will, "makes him so offensive to me that I can't endure him." His verses, therefore, are mediocre ; his speeches in Parliament are utter failures ; his practice at the bar is dwindling every year ; his powers (always small) are utterly leaving him, and he is repeating his confounded jokes until they quite nauseate. Why, only about myself, and within these three days, I read a nice little article—written in sorrow, you know, not in anger—by our eminent *confrère* Wiggins, deploring the decay of &c. &c. And Wiggins's little article which was not found suitable for a certain Magazine?—*Allons donc!* The drunkard says the pickled salmon gave him the headache ; the man who hates us gives *a* reason,

but not *the* reason. Bedford was angry with Bulkeley for abusing his mistress at the servants' table? Yes. But for what else besides? I don't care—nor possibly does your worship, the exalted reader, for these low vulgar kitchen quarrels.

Out of that ground-floor room, then, I would not move in spite of the utmost efforts of my Lady Baker's broad shoulder to push me out; and with many grins that evening, Bedford complimented me on my gallantry in routing the enemy at luncheon. I think he may possibly have told his master, for Lovel looked very much alarmed and uneasy when we greeted each other on his return from the city, but became more composed when Lady Baker appeared at the second dinner-bell, without a trace on her fine countenance of that storm which had caused all her waves to heave with such commotion at noon. How finely some people, by the way, can hang up quarrels—or pop them into a drawer—as they do their work, when dinner is announced, and take them out again at a convenient season! Baker was mild, gentle, a thought sad and sentimental—tenderly interested about her dear son and daughter, in Ireland, whom she *must* go and see—quite easy in hand, in a word, and to the immense relief of all of us. She kissed Lovel on retiring, and prayed blessings on her Frederick. She pointed to the picture: nothing could be more melancholy or more gracious.

"*She* go!" says Mr. Bedford to me at night—"not she. She knows when she's well off; was obliged to turn out of Bakerstown before she came here: that brute Bulkeley told me so. She's always quarrelling with her son and his wife. Angels don't grow everywhere as they do at Putney, Mr. B.! You gave it her well to-day at lunch, you did though!" During my stay at Shrublands, Mr. Bedford paid me a regular evening visit in my room, set the *carte du pays* before me, and in his curt way acquainted me with the characters of the inmates of the house, and the incidents occurring therein.

Captain Clarence Baker did not come to Shrublands on the day when his anxious mother wished to clear out my nest (and expel the amiable bird in it) for her son's benefit. I believe an important fight, which was to come off in the Essex Marshes, and which was postponed in consequence of the interposition of the county magistrates, was the occasion, or at any rate the pretext, of the Captain's delay. "He likes seeing fights better than going to 'em,

stared me in the face as he spoke, and were dyed of the most unblushing purple.) "Clarence Baker, sir, is a young man who would have been invaluable in Sparta as a warning against drunkenness and an exemplar of it. He has helped the regimental surgeon to some most interesting experiments in *delirium tremens*. He is known, and not in the least trusted, in every billiard-room in Brighton, Canterbury, York, Sheffield—on every pavement which has rung with the clink of dragoon boot-heels. By a wise system of revoking at whist he has lost games which have caused not only his partners, but his opponents and the whole club, to admire him and to distrust him: long before and since he was of age, he has written his eminent name to bills which have been dishonoured, and has nobly pleaded his minority as a reason for declining to pay. From the garrison towns where he has been quartered, he has carried away not only the hearts of the milliners, but their gloves, haberdashery, and perfumery. He has had controversies with Cornet Green, regarding horse transactions; disputed turf accounts with Lieutenant Brown; and betting and backgammon differences with Captain Black. From all I have heard he is the worthy son of his admirable mother. And I bet you even on the four events, if you stay three days in a country-house with him—which appears to be your present happy idea—that he will quarrel with you, insult you, and apologize; that he will intoxicate himself more than once; that he will offer to play cards with you, and not pay on losing (if he wins, I perhaps need not state what his conduct will be); and that he will try to borrow money from you, and most likely from your servant, before he goes away." So saying, the sententious Fitz strutted up the steps of one of his many club-haunts in Pall Mall, and left me forewarned, and I trust forearmed, against Captain Clarence and all his works.

The adversary, when at length I came in sight of him, did not seem very formidable. I beheld a weakly little man with Chinese eyes, and pretty little feet and hands, whose pallid countenance told of Finishes and Casinos. His little chest and fingers were decorated with many jewels. A perfume of tobacco hung round him. His little moustache was twisted with an elaborate gummy curl. I perceived that the little hand which twirled the moustache shook woefully: and from the little chest there came a cough surprisingly loud and dismal.

He was lying on a sofa as I entered, and the children of the

re playing round him. "If you are our uncle, why didn't to see us oftener?" asks Popham.

w should I know that you were such uncommonly nice ?" asks the Captain.

re not nice to you," says Popham. "Why do you cough so? used to cough. And why does your hand shake so?"

hand shakes because I am ill: and I cough because I'm ill. ther died of it, and I dare say I shall too."

ope you'll be good, and repent before you die, uncle, and I I you some nice books," says Cecilia.

, bother books!" cries Pop.

d I hope *you'll* be good, Popham," and "You hold *your* miss," and "I shall," and "I shan't," and "You're another," I'll tell Miss Prior,"—"Go and tell, telltale,"—"Boo"—"Boo"—"Boo"—and I don't know what more exclamame tumultuously and rapidly from these dear children, as ncle lay before them, a handkerchief to his mouth, his little h raised on the sofa cushions.

ptain Baker turned a little eye towards me, as I entered the but did not change his easy and elegant posture. When I near to the sofa where he reposed, he was good enough to it:

Glass of sherry!"

It's Mr. Batchelor; it isn't Bedford, uncle," says Cissy.

Mr. Batchelor ain't got any sherry in his pocket:—have you, Batchelor? You ain't like old Mrs. Prior, always pocketing , are you?" cries Pop, and falls a-laughing at the ludicrous of my being mistaken for Bedford.

'Beg your pardon. How should I know, you know?" drawls valid on the sofa. "Everybody's the same now, you see."

Sir!" says I, and "sir" was all I could say. The fact is, I d have replied with something remarkably neat and cutting, would have transfixed the languid little jackanapes who dared take me for a footman; but, you see, I only thought of my tee some eight hours afterwards when I was lying in bed, and I orry to own that a great number of my best *bonmots* have been in that way. So, as I had not the pungent remark ready when ked, I can't say I said it to Captain Baker, but I dare say I ned very red, and said, "Sir!" and—and in fact that was all.

"You were goin' to say somethin'?" asked the Captain, affably.

"You know my friend Mr. Fitzboodle, I believe?" said I; the fact is, I really did not know what to say.

"Some mistake—think not."

"He is a member of the 'Flag Club,'" I remarked, looking my young fellow hard in the face.

"I ain't. There's a set of cads in that club that will say anything."

"You may not know him, sir, but he seemed to know you very well. Are we to have any tea, children?" I say, flinging myself down on an easy chair, taking up a magazine, and adopting an easy attitude, though I dare say my face was as red as a turkey-cock's, and I was boiling over with rage.

As we had a very good breakfast and a profuse luncheon at Shrublands, of course we could not support nature till dinner-time without a five-o'clock tea; and this was the meal for which I pretended to ask. Bedford, with his silver kettle, and his buttony satellite, presently brought in this refection, and of course the children bawled out to him—

"Bedford—Bedford! uncle mistook Mr. Batchelor for you."

"I could not be mistaken for a more honest man, Pop," said I. And the bearer of the tea-urn gave me a look of gratitude and kindness which, I own, went far to restore my ruffled equanimity.

"Since you are the butler, will you get me a glass of sherry and a biscuit?" says the Captain. And Bedford, retiring, returned presently with the wine.

The young gentleman's hand shook so, that, in order to drink his wine, he had to surprise it, as it were, and seize it with his mouth, when a shake brought the glass near his lips. He drained the wine, and held out his hand for another glass. The hand was steadier now.

"You the man who was here before?" asks the Captain.

"Six years ago, when you were here, sir," says the butler.

"What! I ain't changed, I suppose?"

"Yes, you are, sir."

"Then, how the dooce do you remember me?"

"You forgot to pay me some money you borrowed of me, one pound five, sir," says Bedford, whose eyes slyly turned in my direction.

And here, according to her wont at this meal, the dark-robed

Miss Prior entered the room. She was coming forward with her ordinarily erect attitude and firm step, but paused in her walk an instant, and when she came to us, I thought, looked remarkably pale. She made a slight curtsey, and it must be confessed that Captain Baker rose up from his sofa for a moment when she appeared. She then sat down, with her back towards him, turning towards herself the table and its tea apparatus.

At this board my Lady Baker found us assembled when she returned from her afternoon drive. She flew to her darling reprobate of a son. She took his hand, she smoothed back his hair from his damp forehead. "My darling child," cries this fond mother, "what a pulse you have got!"

"I suppose, because I've been drinking," says the prodigal.

"Why didn't you come out driving with me? The afternoon was lovely!"

"To pay visits at Richmond? Not as I knows on, ma'am," says the invalid. "Conversation with elderly ladies about poodles, Bible societies, that kind of thing? It must be a doosid lovely afternoon that would make me like that sort of game." And here comes a fit of coughing, over which mamma ejaculates her sympathy.

"Kick—kick—killin' myself!" gasps out the Captain; "know I am. No man *can* lead my life, and stand it. Dyin' by inches! Dyin' by whole yards, by Jo—ho—hove, I am!" Indeed, he was as bad in health as in morals, this graceless Captain.

"That man of Lovel's seems a d—— insolent beggar," he presently and ingenuously remarks.

"Oh, uncle, you mustn't say those words!" cries niece Cissy.

"He's a man, and may say what he likes, and so will I, when I'm a man. Yes, and I'll say it now, too, if I like," cries Master Popham.

"Not to give me pain, Popham? Will you?" asks the governess.

On which the boy says—"Well, who wants to hurt you, Miss Prior?"

And our colloquy ends by the arrival of the man of the house from the city.

What I have admired in some dear women is their capacity for quarrelling and for reconciliation. As I saw Lady Baker hanging round her son's neck, and fondling his scanty ringlets, I remembered the awful stories with which in former days she used to entertain us

regarding this reprobate. Her heart was pincushioned with his filial crimes. Under her chestnut front her ladyship's real head of hair was grey, in consequence of his iniquities. His precocious appetite had devoured the greater part of her jointure. He had treated her many dangerous illnesses with indifference: had been the worst son, the worst brother, the most ill-conducted school-boy, the most immoral young man—the terror of households, the Lovelace of garrison towns, the perverter of young officers; in fact, Lady Baker did not know how she supported existence at all under the agony occasioned by his crimes, and it was only from the possession of a more than ordinarily strong sense of religion that she was enabled to bear her burden.

The Captain himself explained these alternating maternal caresses and quarrels in his easy way.

"Saw how the old lady kissed and fondled me?" says he to his brother-in-law. "Quite refreshin', ain't it? Hang me, I thought she was goin' to send me a bit of sweetbread off her own plate. Came up to my room last night, wanted to tuck me up in bed, and abused my brother to me for an hour. You see, when I'm in favour, she always abuses Baker; when *he's* in favour she abuses me to him. And my sister-in-law, didn't she give it my sister-in-law! Oh! I'll trouble you! And poor Cecilia—why, hang me, Mr. Batchelor, she used to go on—this bottle's corked, I'm hanged if it isn't—to go on about Cecilia, and call her . . . Hullo!"

Here he was interrupted by our host, who said sternly—

"Will you please to forget those quarrels, or not mention them here? Will you have more wine, Batchelor?"

And Lovel rises, and haughtily stalks out of the room. To do Lovel justice, he had a great contempt and dislike for his young brother-in-law, which, with his best magnanimity, he could not at all times conceal.

So our host stalks towards the drawing-room, leaving Captain Clarence sipping wine.

"Don't go, too," says the Captain. "He's a confounded rum fellow, my brother-in-law is. He's a confounded ill-conditioned fellow, too. They always are, you know, these tradesmen fellows, these half-bred 'uns. I used to tell my sister so; but she *would* have him, because he had such lots of money, you know. And she threw over a fellar she was very fond of; and I told her she'd regret it. I told Lady B. she'd regret it. It was all Lady B.'s doing.

She made Cissy throw the fellar over. He was a bad match, certainly, Tom Mountain was; and not a clever fellow, you know, or that sort of thing; but, at any rate, he was a gentleman, and better than a confounded sugar-baking beggar out Ratcliff Highway."

"You seem to find that claret very good," I remark, speaking, I may say, Socratically, to my young friend, who had been swallowing bumper after bumper.

"Claret good! Yes, doosid good!"

"Well, you see our confounded sugar-baker gives you his best."

"And why shouldn't he, hang him? Why, the fellow chokes with money. What does it matter to him how much he spends? You're a poor man, I dare say. You don't look as if you were overflush of money. Well, if *you* stood a good dinner, it would be all right—I mean it would show—you understand me, you know. But a sugar-baker with ten thousand a year, what does it matter to him, bottle of claret more—less?".

"Let us go in to the ladies," I say.

"Go in to mother! *I* don't want to go in to my mother," cries out the artless youth. "And I don't want to go in to the sugar-baker, hang him! and I don't want to go in to the children; and I'd rather have a glass of brandy-and-water with you, old boy. Here you! What's your name? Bedford! I owe you five-and-twenty shillings, do I, old Bedford? Give us a glass of Schnaps, and I'll pay you! Look here, Batchelor. I hate that sugar-baker. Two years ago, I drew a bill on him, and he wouldn't pay it—perhaps he would have paid it, but my sister wouldn't let him. And, I say, shall we go and have a cigar in your room? My mother's been abusing you to me like fun this morning. She abuses everybody. She used to abuse Cissy. Cissy used to abuse her—used to fight like two cats . . . ."

And if I narrate this conversation, dear Spartan youth! if I show thee this Helot maundering in his cups, it is that from his odious example thou may'st learn to be moderate in the use of thine own. Has the enemy who has entered thy mouth ever stolen away thy brains? Has wine ever caused thee to blab secrets; to utter egotisms and follies? Beware of it. Has it ever been thy friend at the end of the hard day's work, the cheery companion of thy companions, the promoter of harmony, kindness, harmless social pleasure?

Be thankful for it. Three years since, when the comet was blazing in the autumnal sky, I stood on the château-steps of a great claret proprietor. "Boirai-je de ton vin, O comète?" I said, addressing the luminary with the flaming tail. "Shall those generous bunches which you ripen yield their juices for me *morituro?*" It was a solemn thought. Ah! my dear brethren! who knows the Order of the Fates? When shall we pass the Gloomy Gates? Which of us goes, which of us waits to drink those famous Fifty-eights? A sermon, upon my word! And pray why not a little homily on an autumn eve over a purple cluster? . . . If that rickety boy had only drunk claret, I warrant you his tongue would not have blabbed, his hand would not have shaken, his wretched little brain and body would not have reeled with fever.

"'Gad," said he next day to me, "cut again last night. Have an idea that I abused Lovel. When I have a little wine on board, always speak my mind, don't you know? Last time I was here in my poor sister's time, said somethin' to her, don't quite know what it was, somethin' confoundedly true and unpleasant I dare say. I think it was about a fellow she used to go on with before she married the sugar-baker. And I got orders to quit, by Jove, sir—neck and crop, sir, and no mistake! And we gave it one another over the stairs. Oh, my! we did pitch in!—And that was the last time I ever saw Cecilia—give you my word. A doosid unforgiving woman my poor sister was, and between you and me, Batchelor, as great a flirt as ever threw a fellar over. You should have heard her and my Lady B. go on, that's all!—Well, mamma, are you going out for a drive in the coachy-poachy?—Not as I knows on, thank you, as I before had the honour to observe. Mr. Batchelor and me are going to play a little game at billiards." We did, and I won; and, from that day to this, have never been paid my little winnings.

On the day after the doughty captain's arrival, Miss Prior, in whose face I had remarked a great expression of gloom and care, neither made her appearance at breakfast nor at the children's dinner. "Miss Prior was a little unwell," Lady Baker said, with an air of most perfect satisfaction. "Mr. Drencher will come to see her this afternoon, and prescribe for her, I dare say," adds her ladyship, nodding and winking a roguish eye at me. I was at a loss to understand what was the point of humour which amused Lady B., until she herself explained it.

"My good sir," she said, "I think Miss Prior is not at all *averse* to being ill." And the nods recommenced.

"As how?" I ask.

"To being ill, or at least to calling in the medical man."

"Attachment between governess and Sawbones I make bold for to presume?" says the Captain.

"Precisely, Clarence—a very fitting match. I saw the affair, even before Miss Prior owned it—that is to say, she has not denied it. She says she can't afford to marry, that she has children enough at home in her brothers and sisters. She is a well-principled young woman, and does credit, Mr. Batchelor, to your recommendation, and the education she has received from her uncle, the Master of St. Boniface."

"Cissy to school; Pop to Eton; and Miss What-d'you-call to grind the pestle in Sawbones' back-shop: I see!" says Captain Clarence. "He seems a low, vulgar blackguard, that Sawbones."

"Of course, my love, what can you expect from that sort of person?" asks mamma, whose own father was a small attorney in a small Irish town.

"I wish I had his confounded good health," cries Clarence, coughing.

"My poor darling!" says mamma.

I said nothing. And so Elizabeth was engaged to that great, broad-shouldered, red-whiskered young surgeon with the huge appetite and the dubious *h*'s! Well, why not? What was it to me? Why shouldn't she marry him? Was he not an honest man, and a fitting match for her? Yes. Very good. Only if I *do* love a bird or flower to glad me with its dark blue eye, it is the first to fade away. If I *have* a partiality for a young gazelle it is the first to—— psha! What have I to do with this namby-pamby? Can the heart that has truly loved ever forget, and doesn't it as truly love on to the——stuff! I am past the age of such follies. I might have made a woman happy: I think I should. But the fugacious years have lapsed, my Posthumus! My waist is now a good bit wider than my chest, and it is decreed that I shall be alone!

My tone, then, when next I saw Elizabeth, was sorrowful—not angry. Drencher, the young doctor, came punctually enough, you may be sure, to look after his patient. Little Pinhorn, the children's maid, led the young practitioner smiling towards the schoolroom

regions. His creaking highlows sprang swiftly up the stairs. I happened to be in the hall, and surveyed him with a grim pleasure. "Now he is in the schoolroom," I thought. "Now he is taking her hand—it is very white—and feeling her pulse. And so on, and so on. Surely, surely Pinhorn remains in the room?" I am sitting on a hall-table as I muse plaintively on these things, and gaze up the stairs by which the Hakeem (great carroty-whiskered cad!) has passed into the sacred precincts of the harem. As I gaze up the stair, another door opens into the hall; a scowling face peeps through that door, and looks up the stair, too. 'Tis Bedford, who has slid out of his pantry, and watches the doctor. And thou, too, my poor Bedford! Oh! the whole world throbs with vain heart-pangs, and tosses and heaves with longing, unfulfilled desires! All night, and all over the world, bitter tears are dropping as regular as the dew, and cruel memories are haunting the pillow. Close my hot eyes, kind Sleep! Do not visit it, dear delusive images out of the Past! Often your figure shimmers through my dreams, Glorvina. Not as you are now, the stout mother of many children—you always had an alarming likeness to your own mother, Glorvina—but as you were—slim, black-haired, blue-eyed—when your carnation lips warbled the "Vale of Avoca" or the "Angel's Whisper." "What!" I say then, looking up the stair, "am I absolutely growing jealous of yon apothecary?—O fool!" And at this juncture, out peers Bedford's face from the pantry, and I see he is jealous too. I tie my shoe as I sit on the table; I don't affect to notice Bedford in the least (who, in fact, pops his own head back again as soon as he sees mine). I take my wideawake from the peg, set it on one side my head, and strut whistling out of the hall-door. I stretch over Putney Heath, and my spirit resumes its tranquillity.

I sometimes keep a little journal of my proceedings, and on referring to its pages, the scene rises before me pretty clearly to which the brief notes allude. On this day I find noted: "*Friday, July 14.—B. came down to-day. Seems to require a great deal of attendance from Dr.—Row between dowagers after dinner.*" "B.," I need not remark, is Bessy. "Dr.," of course, you know. "Row between dowagers" means a battle royal between Mrs. Bonnington and Lady Baker, such as not unfrequently raged under the kindly Lovel's roof.

Lady Baker's gigantic menial Bulkeley condescended to wait at

the family dinner at Shrublands, when perforce he had to put himself under Mr. Bedford's orders. Bedford would gladly have dispensed with the London footman, over whose calves, he said, he and his boy were always tumbling; but Lady Baker's dignity would not allow her to part from her own man; and her good-natured son-in-law allowed her, and indeed almost all other persons, to have their own way. I have reason to fear Mr. Bulkeley's morals were loose. Mrs. Bonnington had a special horror of him; his behaviour in the village public-houses, where his powder and plush were for ever visible—his freedom of conduct and conversation before the good lady's nurse and parlour-maids—provoked her anger and suspicion. More than once, she whispered to me her loathing of this flour-besprinkled monster; and, as much as such a gentle creature could, she showed her dislike to him by her behaviour. The flunkey's solemn equanimity was not to be disturbed by any such feeble indications of displeasure. From his powdered height, he looked down upon Mrs. Bonnington, and her esteem or her dislike was beneath him.

Now on this Friday night the 14th, Captain Clarence had gone to pass the day in town, and our Bessy made her appearance again, the doctor's prescriptions having, I suppose, agreed with her. Mr. Bulkeley, who was handing coffee to the ladies, chose to offer none to Miss Prior, and I was amused when I saw Bedford's heel scrunch down on the flunkey's right foot, as he pointed towards the governess. The oaths which Bulkeley had to devour in silence must have been frightful. To do the gallant fellow justice, I think he would have died rather than speak before company in a drawing-room. He limped up and offered the refreshment to the young lady, who bowed and declined it.

"Frederick," Mrs. Bonnington begins, when the coffee-ceremony is over, "now the servants are gone, I must scold you about the waste at your table, my dear. What was the need of opening that great bottle of champagne? Lady Baker only takes two glasses. Mr. Batchelor doesn't touch it." (No, thank you, my dear Mrs. Bonnington: too old a stager.) "Why not have a little bottle instead of that great, large, immense one? Bedford is a teetotaller. I suppose it is *that London footman who likes it.*"

"My dear mother, I haven't really ascertained his tastes," says Lovel.

"Then why not tell Bedford to open a pint, dear?" pursues mamma.

"Oh, Bedford—Bedford, we must not mention *him*, Mrs. Bonnington!" cries Lady Baker. "Bedford is faultless. Bedford has the keys of everything. Bedford is not to be controlled in anything. Bedford is to be at liberty to be rude to my servant."

"Bedford was admirably kind in his attendance on your daughter, Lady Baker," says Lovel, his brow darkening: "and as for your man, I should think he was big enough to protect himself from any rudeness of poor Dick!" The good fellow had been angry for one moment, at the next he was all for peace and conciliation.

Lady Baker puts on her superfine air. With that air she had often awe-stricken good, simple Mrs. Bonnington; and she loved to use it whenever city folks or humble people were present. You see she thought herself your superior and mine, as *de par le monde* there are many artless Lady Bakers who do. "My dear Frederick!" says Lady B. then, putting on her best Mayfair manner, "excuse me for saying, but you don't know the—the class of servant to which Bulkeley belongs. I had him as a great favour from Lord Toddleby's. That—that class of servant is not generally accustomed to go out single."

"Unless they are two behind a carriage-perch they pine away, I suppose," remarks Mr. Lovel, "as one love-bird does without his mate."

"No doubt—no doubt," says Lady B., who does not in the least understand him; "I only say you are not accustomed here—in this kind of establishment, you understand—to that class of ——"

But here Mrs. Bonnington could contain her wrath no more. "Lady Baker!" cries that injured mother, "is my son's establishment not good enough for any powdered wretch in England? Is the house of a British merchant——"

"My dear creature—my dear creature!" interposes her ladyship, "it *is* the house of a British merchant, and a most comfortable house too."

"Yes, *as you find it*," remarks mamma.

"Yes, as I find it, when I come to take care of that *departed angel's children*, Mrs. Bonnington!"—(Lady B. here indicates the Cecilian effigy)—"of that dear seraph's orphans, Mrs. Bonnington!

*You* cannot. You have other duties—other. children—a husband, whom you have left at home in delicate health, and who——"

"Lady Baker!" exclaims Mrs. Bonnington, "no one shall say I don't take care of my dear husband!"

"My dear Lady Baker!—my dear—dear mother!" cries Lovel, *éploré*, and whimpers aside to me, "They spar in this way every night, when we're alone. It's too bad, ain't it, Batch?"

"I say you *do* take care of Mr. Bonnington," Baker blandly resumes (she has hit Mrs. Bonnington on the raw place, and smilingly proceeds to thong again): "I say you *do* take care of your husband, my dear creature, and that is why you can't attend to Frederick! And as he is of a very easy temper,—except sometimes with his poor Cecilia's mother,—he allows all his tradesmen to cheat him; all his servants to cheat him; Bedford to be rude to everybody; and if to me, why not to my servant Bulkeley, with whom Lord Toddleby's groom of the chambers gave me the very highest character?"

Mrs. Bonnington in a great flurry broke in by saying she was surprised to hear that noblemen *had* grooms in their chambers: and she thought they were much better in the stables: and when they dined with Captain Huff, you know, Frederick, *his* man always brought such a dreadful smell of the stable in with him, that—— Here she paused. Baker's eye was on her; and that dowager was grinning a cruel triumph.

"He!—he! You mistake, my good Mrs. Bonnington!" says her ladyship. "Your poor mother mistakes, my dear Frederick. You have lived in a quiet and most respectable sphere, but not, you understand, not——"

"Not what, pray, Lady Baker? We have lived in this neighbourhood twenty years: in my late husband's time, when *we saw a great deal of company*, and this dear Frederick was a boy at Westminster School. And we have *paid* for everything we have had for twenty years; and we have not owed a penny to any *tradesman*. And we may not have had *powdered footmen*, six feet high, impertinent beasts, who were rude to all the maids in the place. Don't—I *will* speak, Frederick! But servants who loved us, and who were *paid their wages*, and who—o—ho—ho—ho!"

Wipe your eyes, dear friends! out with all your pocket-handkerchiefs. I protest I cannot bear to see a woman in distress. Of course Fred Lovel runs to console his dear old mother, and vows Lady Baker meant no harm.

"Meant harm! My dear Frederick, what harm can I mean? I only said your poor mother did not seem to know what a groom of the chambers was! How should she?"

"Come—come," says Frederick, "enough of this! Miss Prior, will you be so kind as to give us a little music?"

Miss Prior was playing Beethoven at the piano, very solemnly and finely, when our Black Sheep returned to this quiet fold, and, I am sorry to say, in a very riotous condition. The brilliancy of his eye, the purple flush on his nose, the unsteady gait, and uncertain tone of voice, told tales of Captain Clarence, who stumbled over more than one chair before he found a seat near me.

"Quite right, old boy," says he, winking at me. "Cut again—dooshid good fellosh. Better than being along with you shtoopid-old-fogish." And he began to warble wild "Fol-de-rol-lolls" in an insane accompaniment to the music.

"By heavens, this is too bad!" growls Lovel. "Lady Baker, let your big man carry your son to bed. Thank you, Miss Prior!"

At a final yell, which the unlucky young scapegrace gave, Elizabeth stopped, and rose from the piano, looking very pale. She made her curtsey, and was departing, when the wretched young captain sprang up, looked at her, and sank back on the sofa with another wild laugh. Bessy fled away scared, and white as a sheet.

"TAKE THE BRUTE TO BED!" roars the master of the house, in great wrath. And scapegrace was conducted to his apartment, whither he went laughing wildly, and calling out, "Come on, old sh-sh-shugar-baker!"

The morning after this fine exhibition, Captain Clarence Baker's mamma announced to us that her poor dear suffering boy was too ill to come to breakfast, and I believe he prescribed for himself devilled drumstick and soda-water, of which he partook in his bedroom. Lovel, seldom angry, was violently wroth with his brother-in-law; and, almost always polite, was at breakfast scarcely civil to Lady Baker. I am bound to say that female abused her position. She appealed to Cecilia's picture a great deal too much during the course of breakfast. She hinted, she sighed, she waggled her head at me, and spoke about "that angel" in the most tragic manner. Angel is all very well: but your angel brought in *à tout propos;* your departed blessing called out of her grave ever so many times a day; when grandmamma wants to carry a point of her own; when the children

re naughty, or noisy; when papa betrays a flickering inclination to ine at his club, or to bring home a bachelor friend or two to hrublands;—I say your angel always dragged in by the wings into ıe conversation loses her effect. No man's heart put on wider crape ıan Lovel's at Cecilia's loss. Considering the circumstances, his rief was most creditable to him: but at breakfast, at lunch, about ulkeley the footman, about the barouche or the phaeton, or any umpery domestic perplexity, to have a *Deus intersit* was too much. ınd I observed, with some inward satisfaction, that when Baker ttered her pompous funereal phrases, rolled her eyes up to the eiling, and appealed to that quarter, the children ate their jam and uarrelled and kicked their little shins under the table, Lovel read ıis paper and looked at his watch to see if it was omnibus time; ınd Bessy made the tea, quite undisturbed by the old lady's ragical prattle.

When Baker described her son's fearful cough and dreadfully everish state, I said, "Surely, Lady Baker, *Mr. Drencher* had better ɔe sent for;" and I suppose I uttered the disgusting dissyllable Drencher with a fine sarcastic accent; for once, just once, Bessy's grey eyes rose through the spectacles and met mine with a glance of ınutterable sadness, then calmly settled down on to the slop-basin ıgain, or the urn, in which her pale features, of course, were odiously listorted.

"You will not bring anybody home to dinner, Frederick, in my ɔoor boy's state?" asks Lady B.

"He may stay in his bedroom I suppose," replies Lovel.

"He is Cecilia's brother, Frederick!" cries the lady.

"Conf——" Lovel was beginning. What was he about to say?

"If you are going to confound your angel in heaven, I have ıothing to say, sir!" cries the mother of Clarence.

"Parbleu, madame!" cried Lovel, in French; "if he were not my ɾife's brother, do you think I would let him stay here?"

"Parly Français? Oui, oui, oui!" cries Pop. "I know what ?a means!"

"And so do *I* know. And I shall lend uncle Clarence some ɔooks which Mr. Bonnington gave me, and——"

"Hold your tongue all!" shouts Lovel, with a stamp of his foot.

"You will, perhaps, have the great kindness to allow me the use ɔf your carriage—or, at least, to wait here until my poor suffering

boy can be moved, Mr. Lovel?" says Lady B., with the airs of a martyr.

Lovel rang the bell. "The carriage for Lady Baker—at her ladyship's hour, Bedford: and the cart for her luggage. Her ladyship and Captain Baker are going away."

"I have lost one child, Mr. Lovel, whom some people seem to forget. I am not going to murder another! I will not leave this house, sir, *unless you drive me from it by force*, until the medical man has seen my boy!" And here she and sorrow sat down again. She was always giving warning. She was always fitting the halter and traversing the cart, was Lady B., but she for ever declined to drop the handkerchief and have the business over. I saw by a little shrug in Bessy's shoulders, what the governess's views were of the matter: and, in a word, Lady B. no more went away on this day, than she had done on forty previous days when she announced her intention of going. She would accept benefits, you see, but then she insulted her benefactors, and so squared accounts.

That great healthy, florid, scarlet-whiskered medical wretch came at about twelve, saw Mr. Baker and prescribed for him: and *of course* he must have a few words with Miss Prior, and inquire into the state of her health. Just as on the previous occasion, I happened to be in the hall when Drencher went upstairs; Bedford happened to be looking out of his pantry-door: I burst into a yell of laughter when I saw Dick's livid face—the sight somehow suited my savage soul.

No sooner was Medicus gone than Bessy, grave and pale, in bonnet and spectacles, came sliding downstairs. I do not mean down the banister, which was Pop's favourite method of descent; but slim, tall, noiseless, in a nunlike calm, she swept down the steps. Of course, I followed her. And there was Master Bedford's nose peeping through the pantry-door at us, as we went out with the children. Pray, what business of *his* was it to be always watching anybody who walked with Miss Prior?

"So, Bessy," I said, "what report does Mr.—hem!—Mr. Drencher—give of the interesting invalid?"

"Oh, the most horrid! He says that Captain Baker has several times had a dreadful disease brought on by drinking, and that he is mad when he has it. He has delusions, sees demons, when he is in this state—wants to be watched."

"Drencher tells you everything?"

She says meekly: "He attends us when we are ill."

I remark, with fine irony: "He attends the whole family: he is always coming to Shrublands!"

"He comes very often," Miss Prior says gravely.

"And do you mean to say, Bessy," I cry, madly cutting off two or three heads of yellow broom with my stick—"do you mean to say a fellow like that, who drops his *h*'s about the room, is a welcome visitor?"

"I should be very ungrateful if he were not welcome, Mr. Batchelor," says Miss Prior. "And call me by my surname, please—and he has taken care of all my family—and——"

"And, of course, of course, of course, Miss Prior!" say I, brutally; "and this is the way the world wags; and this is the way we are ill, and are cured; and we are grateful to the doctor that cures us!"

She nods her grave head. "You used to be kinder to me once, Mr. Batchelor, in old days—in your—in my time of trouble! Yes, my dear, that is a beautiful bit of broom! Oh, what a fine butterfly!" (Cecilia scours the plain after the butterfly.) "You used to be kinder to me once—when we were both unhappy."

"I was unhappy," I say, "but I survived. I was ill, but I am now pretty well, thank you. I was jilted by a false, heartless woman. Do you suppose there are no other heartless women in the world?" And I am confident, if Bessy's breast had not been steel, the daggers which darted out from my eyes would have bored frightful stabs in it.

But she shook her head, and looked at me so sadly that my eye-daggers tumbled down to the ground at once; for you see, though I am a jealous Turk, I am a very easily appeased jealous Turk; and if I had been Bluebeard, and my wife, just as I was going to decapitate her, had lifted up her head from the block and cried a little, I should have dropped my scimitar, and said, "Come, come, Fatima, never mind for the present about that key and closet business, and I'll chop your head off some other morning." I say Bessy disarmed me. Pooh! I say, women will make a fool of me to the end. Ah! ye gracious Fates! Cut my thread of life ere it grow too long. Suppose I were to live till seventy, and some little wretch of a woman were to set her cap at me? She would catch me—I know she would. All the males of our family have been spoony and soft, to a degree

perfectly ludicrous and despicable to contemplate—— Well, Bessy Prior, putting a hand out, looked at me, and said—

"You are the oldest and best friend I have ever had, Mr. Batchelor—the only friend."

"Am I, Elizabeth?" I gasp, with a beating heart.

"Cissy is running back with a butterfly." (Our hands unlock.) "Don't you see the difficulties of my position? Don't you know that ladies are often jealous of governesses; and that unless—unless they imagined I was—I was favourable to Mr. Drencher, who is very good and kind—the ladies of Shrublands might not like my remaining alone in the house with—with—you understand?" A moment the eyes look over the spectacles: at the next, the meek bonnet bows down towards the ground.

I wonder did she hear the bump—bumping of my heart! O heart!—O wounded heart! did I ever think thou would'st bump—bump again? "Egl—Egl—izabeth," I say, choking with emotion, "do, do, do you—te—tell me—you don't—don't—don't—lo—love that apothecary?"

She shrugs her shoulder—her charming shoulder.

"And if," I hotly continue, "if a gentleman—if a man of mature age certainly, but who has a kind heart and four hundred a year of his own—were to say to you, 'Elizabeth! will you bid the flowers of a blighted life to bloom again?—Elizabeth! will you soothe a wounded heart?'——"

"Oh, Mr. Batchelor!" she sighed, and then added quickly, "Please, don't take my hand. Here's Pop."

And that dear child (bless him!) came up at the moment, saying, "Oh, Miss Prior, look here! I've got such a jolly big toadstool!" And next came Cissy, with a confounded butterfly. O Richard the Third! Haven't you been maligned because you smothered two little nuisances in a Tower? What is to prove to me that you did not serve the little brutes right, and that you weren't a most humane man? Darling Cissy coming up, then, in her dear, charming way, says, "You shan't take Mr. Batchelor's hand, you shall take *my* hand!" And she tosses up her little head, and walks with the instructress of her youth.

"Ces enfans ne comprennent guère le Français," says Miss Prior, speaking very rapidly.

"Après lonche?" I whisper. The fact is, I was so agitated I

Bessy's Reflections.

hardly knew what the French for lunch was. And then our conversation dropped: and the beating of my own heart was all the sound I heard.

Lunch came. I couldn't eat a bit: I should have choked. Bessy ate plenty, and drank a glass of beer. It was her dinner, to be sure. Young *Blacksheep* did not appear. We did not miss him. When Lady Baker began to tell her story of George IV. at Slane Castle, I went into my own room. I took a book. Books? Psha! I went into the garden. I took out a cigar. But no, I would not smoke it. Perhaps she——many people don't like smoking.

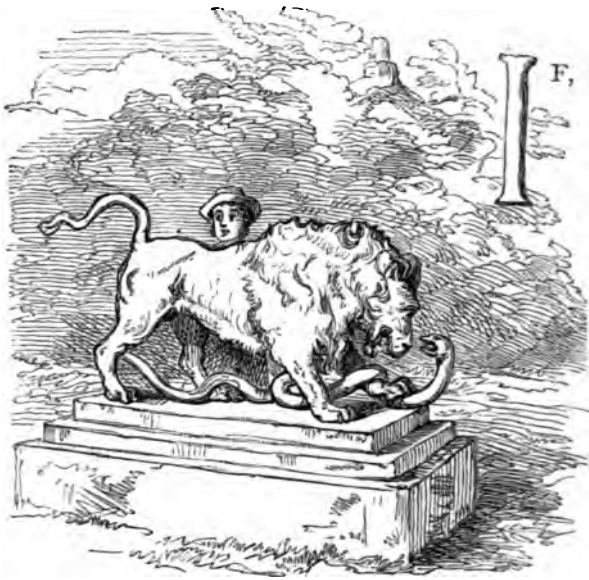
I went into the garden. "Come into the garden, Maud." I sat by a large lilac-bush. I waited. Perhaps she would come? The morning-room windows were wide open on the lawn. Will she never come? Ah! what is that tall form advancing? gliding—gliding into the chamber like a beauteous ghost? "Who most does like an angel show, you may be sure 'tis she." She comes up to the glass. She lays her spectacles down on the mantelpiece. She puts a slim white hand over her auburn hair and looks into the mirror. Elizabeth, Elizabeth! I come!

As I came up, I saw a horrid little grinning, debauched face surge over the back of a great armchair and look towards Elizabeth. It was Captain Blacksheep, of course. He laid his elbows over the chair. He looked keenly and with a diabolical smile at the unconscious girl; and just as I reached the window, he cried out, "*Bessy Bellenden, by Jove!*"

Elizabeth turned round, gave a little cry, and————but what happened I shall tell in the ensuing chapter.

## CHAPTER V.

### IN WHICH I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT.



IF, when I heard Baker call out Bessy Bellenden, and adjure Jove, he had run forward and seized Elizabeth by the waist, or offered her other personal indignity, I too should have run forward on my side and engaged him. Though I am a stout elderly man, short in stature and in wind, I know I am a match for *that* rickety little captain on his high-heeled boots. A match for him? I believe Miss Bessy would have been a match for both of us. Her white arm was as hard and polished as ivory. Had she held it straight pointed against the rush of the dragoon, he would have fallen backwards before his intended prey: I have no doubt he would. It was the hen, in this case, was stronger than the libertine fox, and *au besoin* would have pecked the little marauding vermin's eyes out. Had, I say, Partlet been weak, and Reynard strong, I *would* have come forward: I certainly would. Had he been a wolf now, instead of a fox, I am certain I should have run in upon him, grappled with

n, torn his heart and tongue out of his black throat, and trampled
: lawless brute to death.

Well, I didn't do any such thing. I was just *going* to run in,—
d I didn't. I was just going to rush to Bessy's side to clasp her
have no doubt) to my heart: to beard the whiskered champion
o was before her, and perhaps say, "Cheer thee—cheer thee, my
rsecuted maiden, my beauteous love—my Rebecca! Come on, Sir
ian de Bois Guilbert, thou dastard Templar! It is I, Sir Wilfrid of
nhoe." (By the way, though the fellow was not a *Templar*, he
s a *Lincoln's-Inn man*, having passed twice through the Insolvent
urt there with infinite discredit.) But I made no heroic speeches.
ere was no need for Rebecca to jump out of window and risk
r lovely neck. How could she, in fact, the French window being
sh with the ground-floor? And I give you my honour, just as I
s crying my war-cry, couching my lance, and rushing *à la recousse*
on Sir Baker, a sudden thought made me drop my (figurative)
int: a sudden idea made me rein in my galloping (metaphorical)
ed and spare Baker for that time.

Suppose I had gone in? But for that sudden precaution, there
ght have been a Mrs. Batchelor. I might have been a bullied
her of ten children. (Elizabeth has a fine high temper of her own.)
hat is four hundred and twenty a year, with a wife and perhaps
lf-a-dozen children? Should I have been a whit the happier?
ould Elizabeth? Ah! no. And yet I feel a certain sort of shame,
en now, when I think that I didn't go in. Not that I was in a
ght, as some people choose to hint. I swear I was not. But the
ason why I did not charge was this—

Nay, I *did* charge part of the way, and then, I own, stopped. It
s an error in judgment. It wasn't a want of courage. Lord
eorge Sackville was a brave man, and as cool as a cucumber under
e. Well, *he* didn't charge at the battle of Minden, and Prince
erdinand made the deuce and all of a disturbance, as we know.
yng was a brave man,—and I ask, wasn't it a confounded shame
ecuting him? So with respect to myself. Here is my statement.
make it openly. I don't care. I am accused of seeing a woman
sulted, and not going to her rescue. I am not guilty, I say. That
there were reasons which caused me not to attack. Even putting
ide the superior strength of Elizabeth herself to the enemy,—I vow
ere were cogent and honourable reasons why I did not charge home.

You see I happened to be behind a blue lilac-bush (and was turning a rhyme—heaven help us!—in which *death* was only to part me and Elizabeth) when I saw Baker's face surge over the chair-back. I rush forward as he cries "by Jove." Had Miss Prior cried out on her part, the strength of twenty Heenans, I know, would have nerved this arm; but all she did was to turn pale, and say, "Oh, mercy! Captain Baker! Do pity me!"

"What! you remember me, Bessy Bellenden, do you?" asks the Captain, advancing.

"Oh, not that name! please, not that name!" cries Bessy.

"I thought I knew you yesterday," says Baker. "Only, gad, you see, I had so much claret on board, I did not much know what was what. And oh! Bessy, I have got such a splitter of a headache."

"Oh! please—please, my name is Miss Prior. Pray! pray, sir, don't——"

"You've got handsomer—doosid deal handsomer. Know you now well, your spectacles off. You come in here—teach my nephew and niece, humbug my sister, make love to the sh—— Oh! you uncommon sly little toad!"

"Captain Baker! I beg—I implore you," says Bessy, or something of the sort: for the white hands assumed an attitude of supplication.

"Pooh! don't gammon *me!*" says the rickety Captain (or words to that effect), and seizes those two firm white hands in his moist, trembling palms.

Now do you understand why I paused? When the dandy came grinning forward, with looks and gestures of familiar recognition: when the pale Elizabeth implored him to spare her:—a keen arrow of jealousy shot whizzing through my heart, and caused me well-nigh to fall backwards as I ran forwards. I bumped up against a bronze group in the garden. The group represented a lion stung by a serpent. *I* was a lion stung by a serpent too. Even Baker could have knocked me down. Fiends and anguish! he had known her before. The Academy, the life she had led, the wretched old tipsy ineffective guardian of a father—all these antecedents in poor Bessy's history passed through my mind. And I had offered my heart and troth to this woman! Now, my dear sir, I appeal to you. What would *you* have done? Would *you* have liked to have such a

BEDFORD TO THE RESCUE.

sudden suspicion thrown over the being of your affection? "Oh! spare me—spare me!" I heard her say, in clear—too clear—pathetic tones. And then there came rather a shrill "Ah!" and then the lion was up in my breast again; and I give you my honour, just as I was going to step forward—to step?—to *rush* forward from behind the urn where I had stood for a moment with thumping heart, Bessy's "Ah!" or little cry was followed by a *whack*, which I heard as clear as anything I ever heard in my life;—and I saw the little Captain spin back, topple over a chair heels up, and in this posture heard him begin to scream and curse in shrill tones. . . .

Not for long, for as the Captain and the chair tumble down, a door springs open;—a man rushes in, who pounces like a panther upon the prostrate Captain, pitches into his nose and eyes, and chokes his bad language by sending a fist down his naughty throat.

"Oh! thank you, Bedford!—please, leave him, Bedford! that's enough. There, don't hurt him any more!" says Bessy, laughing—laughing, upon my word.

"Ah! will you?" says Bedford. "Lie still, you little beggar, or I'll knock your head off. Look here, Miss Prior!—Elizabeth—dear—dear Elizabeth! I love you with all my heart, and soul, and strength—I do."

"O Bedford! Bedford!" warbles Elizabeth.

"I do! I can't help it. I must say it! Ever since Rome, I do. Lie still, you drunken little beast! It's no use. But I adore you, O Elizabeth! Elizabeth!" And there was Dick, who was always following Miss P. about, and poking his head into keyholes to spy her, actually making love to her over the prostrate body of the Captain.

Now, what was I to do? Wasn't I in a most confoundedly awkward situation? A lady had been attacked—*a* lady?—*the* lady, and I hadn't rescued her. Her insolent enemy was overthrown, and I hadn't done it. A champion, three inches shorter than myself, had come in, and dealt the blow. I was in such a rage of mortification, that I should have liked to thrash the Captain and Bedford too. The first I know I could have matched: the second was a tough little hero. And it was he who rescued the damsel, whilst I stood by! In a strait so odious, sudden, and humiliating, what should I, what could I, what did I do?

Behind the lion and snake there is a brick wall and marble balustrade, built for no particular reason, but flanking three steps and

a grassy terrace, which then rises up on a level to the house-windows. Beyond the balustrade is a shrubbery of more lilacs and so forth, by which you can walk round into another path, which also leads up to the house. So as I had not charged—ah! woe is me!—as the battle was over, I—I just went round that shrubbery into the other path, and so entered the house, arriving like Fortinbras in "Hamlet," when everybody is dead and sprawling, you know, and the whole business is done.

And was there to be no end to my shame, or to Bedford's laurels? In that brief interval, whilst I was walking round the bypath (just to give myself a pretext for entering coolly into the premises), this fortunate fellow had absolutely engaged another and larger champion. This was no other than Bulkeley, my Lady B.'s first-class attendant. When the Captain fell, amidst his screams and curses, he called for Bulkeley: and that individual made his appearance, with a little Scotch cap perched on his powdered head.

"Hullo! what's the row year?" says Goliath, entering.

"Kill that blackguard! Hang him, kill him!" screams Captain Blacksheep, rising with bleeding nose.

"I say, what's the row year?" asks the grenadier.

"Off with your cap, sir, before a lady!" calls out Bedford.

"Hoff with my cap! you be blo——"

But he said no more, for little Bedford jumped some two feet from the ground, and knocked the cap off, so that a cloud of ambrosial powder filled the room with violet odours. The immense frame of the giant shook at this insult: "I will be the death on you, you little beggar!" he grunted out; and was advancing to destroy Dick, just as I entered in the cloud which his head had raised.

"I'll knock the brains as well as the powder out of your ugly head!" says Bedford, springing at the poker. At which juncture I entered.

"What—what is this disturbance?" I say, advancing with an air of mingled surprise and resolution.

"You git out of the way till I knock his 'ead off!" roars Bulkeley.

"Take up your cap, sir, and leave the room," I say, still with the same elegant firmness.

"Put down that there poker, you coward!" bellows the monster on board wages.

"Miss Prior!" I say (like a dignified hypocrite, as I own I was),

"I hope no one has offered you a rudeness?" And I glare round, first at the knight of the bleeding nose, and then at his squire.

Miss Prior's face, as she replied to me, wore a look of awful scorn.

"Thank you, sir," she said, turning her head over her shoulder, and looking at me with her grey eyes. "Thank you, Richard Bedford! God bless you! I shall ever be thankful to you, wherever I am." And the stately figure swept out of the room.

She had seen me behind that confounded statue, then, and I had not come to her! O torments and racks! O scorpions, fiends and pitchforks! The face of Bedford, too (flashing with knightly gratitude anon as she spoke kind words to him and passed on), wore a look of scorn as he turned towards me, and then stood, his nostrils distended, and breathing somewhat hard, glaring at his enemies, and still grasping his mace of battle.

When Elizabeth was gone, there was a pause of a moment, and then Blacksheep, taking his bleeding cambric from his nose, shrieks out, "Kill him, I say! A fellow that dares to hit one in my condition, and when I'm down! Bulkeley, you great hulking jackass! kill him, I say!"

"Jest let him put that there poker down, that's hall," growls Bulkeley.

"You're afraid, you great cowardly beast! You shall go, Mr. What-d'ye-call-'im—Mr. Bedford—you shall have the sack, sir, as sure as your name is what it is! I'll tell my brother-in-law everything; and as for that woman——"

"If you say a word against her, I'll cane you wherever I see you, Captain Baker!" I cry out.

"Who spoke to *you?*" says the Captain, falling back and scowling at me.

"Who hever told you to put *your* foot in?" says the squire.

I was in such a rage, and so eager to find an object on which I might wreak my fury, that I confess I plunged at this Bulkeley. I gave him two most violent blows on the waistcoat, which caused him to double up with such frightful contortions, that Bedford burst out laughing; and even the Captain with the damaged eye and nose began to laugh too. Then, taking a lesson from Dick, as there was a fine shining dagger on the table, used for the cutting open of reviews and magazines, I seized and brandished this weapon, and I dare say would have sheathed it in the giant's bloated corpus, had he made any

movement towards me. But he only called out, "hI'll be the death on you, you cowards! hI'll be the death of both on you!" and snatching up his cap from the carpet, walked out of the room.

"Glad you did that, though," says Baker, nodding his head. "Think I'd best pack up."

And now the Devil of Rage which had been swelling within me gave place to a worse devil—the Devil of Jealousy—and I turned on the Captain, who was also just about to slink away :—

"Stop!" I cried out—I screamed out, I may say.

"Who spoke to you, I should like to know? and who the dooce dares to speak to me in that sort of way?" says Clarence Baker, with a plentiful garnish of expletives, which need not be here inserted. But he stopped, nevertheless, and turned slouching round.

"You spoke just now of Miss Prior?" I said. "Have you anything against her?"

"What's that to you?" he asked.

"I am her oldest friend. I introduced her into this family. *Dare* you say a word against her?"

"Well, who the dooce has?"

"You knew her before?"

"Yes, I did, then."

"When she went by the name of Bellenden?"

"Of course I did. And what's that to you?" he screams out.

"I this day asked her to be my wife, sir! *That's* what it is to me!" I replied, with severe dignity.

Mr. Clarence began to whistle. "Oh! if that's it—of course not!" he says.

The jealous demon writhed within me and rent me.

"You mean that there *is* something, then?" I asked, glaring at the young reprobate.

"No, I don't," says he, looking very much frightened. "No, there is nothin'. Upon my sacred honour, there isn't, that I know." (I was looking uncommonly fierce at this time, and, I must own, would rather have quarrelled with somebody than not.) "No, there is nothin' that I know. Ever so many years ago, you see, I used to go with Tom Papillion, Turkington, and two or three fellows, to that theatre. Dolphin had it. And we used to go behind the scenes—and—and I own I had a row with her. And I was in the wrong. There now, I own I was. And she left the theatre. And she behaved

quite right. And I was very sorry. And I believe she is as good a woman as ever stept now. And the father was a disreputable old man, but most honourable—I know he was. And there was a fellow in the Bombay service—a fellow by the name of Walker or Walkingham—yes, Walkingham; and I used to meet him at the 'Cave of Harmony,' you know; and he told me that she was as right as right could be. And he was doosidly cut up about leaving her. And he would have married her, I dessay, only for his father the General, who wouldn't stand it. And he was ready to hang himself when he went away. He used to drink awfully, and then he used to swear about her; and we used to chaff him, you know. Low, vulgarish sort of man, he was; and a very passionate fellow. And if you're goin' to marry her, you know—of course, I ask your pardon, and that; and upon the honour of a gentleman I know nothin' against her. And I wish you joy and all that sort of thing. I do now, really now!" And so saying, the mean, mischievous little monkey sneaked away, and clambered up to his own perch in his own bedroom.

Worthy Mrs. Bonnington, with a couple of her young ones, made her appearance at this juncture. She had a key, which gave her a free pass through the garden door, and brought her children for an afternoon's play and fighting with their little nephew and niece. Decidedly, Bessy did not bring up her young folks well. Was it that their grandmothers spoiled them, and undid the governess's work? Were those young people odious (as they often were) by nature, or rendered so by the neglect of their guardians? If Bessy had loved her charges more, would they not have been better? Had she a kind, loving, maternal heart? Ha! This thought—this jealous doubt—smote my bosom: and were she mine, and the mother of many possible little Batchelors, would she be kind to *them?* Would they be wilful, and selfish, and abominable little wretches, in a word, like these children? Nay—nay! Say that Elizabeth has but a cold heart; we cannot be all perfection. But, *per contra*, you must admit that, cold as she is, she does her duty. How good she has been to her own brothers and sisters: how cheerfully she has given away her savings to them: how admirably she has behaved to her mother, hiding the iniquities of that disreputable old schemer, and covering her improprieties with decent filial screens and pretexts. Her mother? *Ah! grands dieux!* You want to marry, Charles Batchelor, and you will have that greedy pauper for a mother-in-law;

that fluffy Bluecoat boy, those hobnailed taw-players, top-spinners toffee-eaters, those underbred girls, for your brothers and sisters-in-law! They will be quartered upon you. You are so absurdly weak and good-natured—you know you are—that you will never be able to resist. Those boys will grow up: they will go out as clerks or shop-boys: get into debt, and expect you to pay their bills: want to be articled to attorneys and so forth, and call upon you for the premium. Their mother will never be out of your house. She will ferret about in your drawers and wardrobes, filch your haberdashery, and cast greedy eyes on the very shirts and coats on your back, and calculate when she can get them for her boys. Those vulgar young miscreants will never fail to come and dine with you on a Sunday. They will bring their young linendraper or articled friends. They will draw bills on you, or give their own to money-lenders, and unless you take up those bills they will consider you a callous, avaricious brute, and the heartless author of their ruin. The girls will come and practise on your wife's piano. *They* won't come to you on Sundays only; they will always be staying in the house. They will always be preventing a *tête-à-tête* between your wife and you. As they grow old, they will want her to take them out to tea-parties, and to give such entertainments, where they will introduce their odious young men. They will expect you to commit meannesses, in order to get theatre tickets for them from the newspaper editors of your acquaintance. You will have to sit in the back seat: to pay the cab to and from the play: to see glances and bows of recognition passing between them and dubious bucks in the lobbies: and to lend the girls your wife's gloves, scarfs, ornaments, smelling-bottles, and handkerchiefs, which of course they will never return. If Elizabeth is ailing from any circumstance, they will get a footing in your house, and she will be jealous of them. The ladies of your own family will quarrel with them of course; and very likely your mother-in-law will tell them a piece of her mind. And you bring this dreary certainty upon you, because, forsooth, you fall in love with a fine figure, a pair of grey eyes, and a head of auburn (not to say red) hair! O Charles Batchelor! in what a galley hast thou seated thyself, and what a family is crowded in thy boat!

All these thoughts are passing in my mind, as good Mrs. Bonnington is prattling to me—I protest I don't know about what. I think I caught some faint sentences about the Patagonian mission,

the National schools, and Mr. Bonnington's lumbago; but I can't say for certain. I was busy with my own thoughts. I had asked the awful question—I was not answered. Bessy had even gone away in a huff about my want of gallantry, but I was easy on that score. As for Mr. Drencher, she had told me her sentiments regarding him; "and though I am considerably older, yet," thought I, "I need not be afraid of *that* rival. But when she says *yes?* Oh, dear! oh, dear! *Yes* means Elizabeth—certainly, a brave young woman—but it means Mrs. Prior, and Gus, and Amelia Jane, and the whole of that dismal family." No wonder, with these dark thoughts crowding my mind, Mrs. Bonnington found me absent; and, as a comment upon some absurd reply of mine, said, "La! Mr. Batchelor, you must be crossed in love!" Crossed in love! It might be as well for some folks if they *were* crossed in love. At my age, and having loved madly, as I did, that party in Dublin, a man doesn't take the second fit by any means so strongly. Well! well! the die was cast, and I was there to bide the hazard. What can be the matter? I look pale and unwell, and had better see Mr. D.? Thank you, my dear Mrs. Bonnington. I had a violent—a violent toothache last night—yes, toothache; and was kept awake, thank you. And there's nothing like having it out? and Mr. D. draws them beautifully, and has taken out six of your children's? It's better now; I dare say it will be better still, soon. I retire to my chamber: I take a book—can't read one word of it. I resume my tragedy. Tragedy? Bosh!

I suppose Mr. Drencher thought his yesterday's patient would be better for a little more advice and medicine, for he must pay a second visit to Shrublands on this day, just after the row with the Captain had taken place, and walked up to the upper regions, as his custom was. Very likely he found Mr. Clarence bathing his nose there, and prescribed for the injured organ. Certainly he knocked at the door of Miss Prior's schoolroom (the fellow was always finding a pretext for entering *that* apartment), and Master Bedford comes to me, with a wobegone, livid countenance, and a "Ha! ha! young Sawbones is up with her!"

"So, my poor Dick," I say, "I heard your confession as I was myself running in to rescue Miss P. from that villain."

"My blood was hup," groans Dick,—"up, I beg your pardon. When I saw that young rascal lay a hand on her I could not help flying at him. I would have hit him if he had been my own father.

And I could not help saying what was on my mind. It would come out; I knew it would some day. I might as well wish for the moon as hope to get her. She thinks herself superior to me, and perhaps she is mistaken. But it's no use; she don't care for me; she don't care for anybody. Now the words are out, in course I mustn't stay here."

"You may get another place easily enough with your character, Bedford!"

But he shook his head. "I'm not disposed to black nobody else's boots no more. I have another place. I have saved a bit of money. My poor old mother is gone, whom you used to be so kind to, Mr. B. I'm alone now. Confound that Sawbones, will he *never* come away? I'll tell you about my plans some day, sir, and I know you'll be so good as to help me." And away goes Dick, looking the picture of woe and despair.

Presently, from the upper rooms, Sawbones descends. I happened to be standing in the hall, you see, talking to Dick. Mr. Drencher scowls at me fiercely, and I suppose I return him haughty glance for glance. He hated me: I him: I liked him to hate me.

"How is your patient, Mr.—a—Drencher?" I ask.

"Trifling contusion of the nose—brown paper and vinegar," says the doctor.

"Great powers! did the villain strike her on the nose?" I cry, in terror.

"*Her*—whom?" says he.

"Oh—ah—yes—indeed; it's nothing," I say, smiling. The fact is I had forgotten about Baker in my natural anxiety for Elizabeth.

"I don't know what you mean by laughing, sir?" says the red-haired practitioner. "But if you mean chaff, Mr. Batchelor, let me tell you I don't want chaff, and I won't have chaff!" and herewith, exit Sawbones, looking black doses at me.

Jealous of me, think I, as I sink down in a chair in the morning-room, where the combat had just taken place. And so thou, too, art fever-caught, my poor physician! What a fascination this girl has! Here's the butler: here's the medical man: here am I: here is the Captain has been smitten—smitten on the nose. Has the gardener been smitten too, and is the page gnawing his buttons off for jealousy, and is Mons. Bulkeley equally in love with her? I take up a review, and think over this, as I glance through its pages.

As I am lounging and reading, Mons. Bulkeley himself makes his pearance, bearing in cloaks and packages belonging to his lady. Have the goodness to take that cap off," I say, coolly.

"*You* 'ave the goodness to remember that if hever I see you hout this 'ouse I'll punch your hugly 'ead off," says the monstrous nial. But I poise my paper-cutter, and he retires growling.

From despondency I pass to hope; and the prospect of marriage, ich before appeared so dark to me, assumes a gayer hue. I have ır hundred a year, and that house in Devonshire Street, Bloomsbury uare, of which the upper part will be quite big enough for us. If have children, there is Queen Square for them to walk and play

Several genteel families I know, who still live in the neighbourod, will come and see my wife, and we shall have a comfortable, sy little society, suited to our small means. The tradesmen in mb's Conduit Street are excellent, and the music at the Foundling vays charming. I shall give up one of my clubs. The other is thin an easy walk.

No: my wife's relations will *not* plague me. Bessy is a most ısible, determined woman, and as cool a hand as I know. She il only see Mrs. Prior at proper (and, I trust, distant) intervals. er brothers and sisters will learn to know their places, and not trude upon me or the company which I keep. My friends, who are ucated people and gentlemen, will not object to visit me because live over a shop (my ground-floor and spacious back premises in evonshire Street are let to a German toy-warehouse). I shall add ıundred or two at least to my income by my literary labour; and ssy, who has practised frugality all her life, and been a good ughter and a good sister, I know will prove a good wife, and, please aven! a good mother. Why, four hundred a year, *plus* two ndred, is a nice little income. And my old college friend, igmore, who is just on the Bench? He will, he must get me a ıce—say three hundred a year. With nine hundred a year we can quite well.

Love is full of elations and despondencies. The future, over ıich such a black cloud of doubt lowered a few minutes since, ıshed a sweet rose-colour now. I saw myself happy, beloved, with competence, and imagined myself reposing in the delightful garden Red Lion Square on some summer evening, and half-a-dozen little tchelors frisking over the flower-bespangled grass there.

After our little colloquy, Mrs. Bonnington, not finding much pleasure in my sulky society, had gone to Miss Prior's room with her young folks, and as the door of the morning-room opened now and again, I could hear the dear young ones scuttling about the passages, where they were playing at horses, and fighting, and so forth. After a while good Mrs. B. came down from the schoolroom. "Whatever has happened, Mr. Batchelor?" she said to me, in her passage through the morning-room. "Miss Prior is very pale and absent. *You* are very pale and absent. Have you been courting her, you naughty man, and trying to supplant Mr. Drencher? There now, you turn as red as my ribbon! Ah! Bessy is a good girl, and *so* fond of my dear children. 'Ah, dear Mrs. Bonnington,' she says to me—but of course you won't tell Lady B.: it would make Lady B. perfectly furious. 'Ah!' says Miss P. to me, 'I wish, ma'am, that my little charges were like their dear little uncles and aunts—so exquisitely brought up!' Pop again wished to beat his uncle. I wish—I wish Frederick would send that child to school! Miss P. owns that he is too much for her. Come, children, it is time to go to dinner." And, with more of this prattle, the good lady summons her young ones, who descend from the schoolroom with their nephew and niece.

Following nephew and niece, comes demure Miss Prior, to whom I fling a knowing glance, which says, plain as eyes can speak—Do, Elizabeth, come and talk for a little to your faithful Batchelor! She gives a sidelong look of intelligence, leaves a parasol and a pair of gloves on a table, accompanies Mrs. Bonnington and the young ones into the garden, sees the clergyman's wife and children disappear through the garden gate, and her own youthful charges engaged in the strawberry-beds; and, of course, returns to the morning-room for her parasol and gloves, which she had forgotten. There is a calmness about that woman—an easy, dauntless dexterity, which frightens me —*ma parole d'honneur*. In that white breast is there a white marble stone in place of the ordinary cordial apparatus? Under the white velvet glove of that cool hand are there bones of cold steel?

"So, Drencher has again been here, Elizabeth?" I say.

She shrugs her shoulders. "To see that wretched Captain Baker. The horrid little man will die! He was not actually sober just now when he—when I—when you saw him. How I wish you had come sooner—to prevent that horrible, tipsy, disreputable quarrel. It

ıakes me very, very thoughtful, Mr. Batchelor. He will speak ɔ his mother—to Mr. Lovel. I shall have to go away. I know must."

"And don't you know where you can find a home, Elizabeth? ıave the words I spoke this morning been so soon forgotten?"

"Oh! Mr. Batchelor! you spoke in a heat. You could not hink seriously of a poor girl like me, so friendless and poor, with so ıany family ties. Pop is looking this way, please. To a man bred ike you, what can I be?"

"You may make the rest of my life happy, Elizabeth!" I cry. We are friends of such old—old date, that you know what my isposition is."

"Oh! indeed," says she, "it is certain that there never was a weeter disposition or a more gentle creature." (Somehow I thought ıe said the words "gentle creature" with rather a sarcastic tone of oice.) "But consider your habits, dear sir. I remember how in eak Street you used to be always giving, and, in spite of your ıcome, always poor. You love ease and elegance; and having, I are say, not too much for yourself now, would you encumber yourself ith—with me and the expenses of a household? I shall always ɛgard you, esteem you, love you as the best friend I ever had, and—*oici venir la mère du vaurien.*"

Enter Lady Baker. "Do I interrupt a *tête-à-tête*, pray?" she asks.

"My benefactor has known me since I was a child, and befriended ıe since then," says Elizabeth, with simple kindness beaming in her ɔok. "We were just speaking—I was just—ah!—telling him that ıy uncle has invited me most kindly to St. Boniface, whenever I can ıe spared; and if you and the family go to the Isle of Wight this .utumn, perhaps you will intercede with Mr. Lovel, and let me have . little holiday. Mary will take every charge of the children, and I lo so long to see my dear aunt and cousins! And I was begging Mr. Batchelor to use his interest with you, and to entreat you to use *your* interest to get me leave. That was what our talk was about."

The deuce it was! I couldn't say No, of course; but I protest I ıad no idea until that moment that our conversation had been about ıunt and uncle at St. Boniface. Again came the horrible suspicion, :he dreadful doubt—the chill as of a cold serpent crawling down my ɔack—which had made me pause, and gasp, and turn pale, anon when Bessy and Captain Clarence were holding colloquy together. What

*has* happened in this woman's life? *Do* I know all about her, or anything; or only just as much as she chooses? O Batch—Batch! I suspect you are no better than an old gaby!

"And Mr. Drencher has just been here and seen your son," Bessy continues, softly; "and he begs and entreats your ladyship to order Captain Baker to be more prudent. Mr. D. says Captain Baker is shortening his life, indeed he is, by his carelessness."

There is Mr. Lovel coming from the city, and the children are running to their papa! And Miss Prior makes her patroness a meek curtsey, and demurely slides away from the room. With a sick heart I say to myself, "She has been—yes—humbugging is the word—humbugging Lady B. Elizabeth! Elizabeth! can it be possible thou art humbugging *me* too?"

Before Lovel enters, Bedford rapidly flits through the room. He looks as pale as a ghost. His face is awfully gloomy.

"Here's the governor come," Dick whispers to me. "It must all come hout now—out, I beg your pardon. So she's caught *you*, has she? I thought she would." And he grins a ghastly grin.

"What do you mean?" I ask, and I dare say turn rather red.

"I know all about it. I'll speak to you to-night, sir. Confound her! confound her!" and he doubles his knuckles into his eyes, and rushes out of the room over Buttons entering with the afternoon tea.

"What on earth's the matter, and why are you knocking the things about?" Lovel asks at dinner of his butler, who, indeed, acted as one distraught. A savage gloom was depicted on Bedford's usually melancholy countenance, and the blunders in his service were many. With his brother-in-law Lovel did not exchange many words. Clarence was not yet forgiven for his escapade two days previous. And when Lady Baker cried, "Mercy, child! what have you done to yourself?" and the Captain replied, "Knocked my face against a dark door—made my nose bleed," Lovel did not look up or express a word of sympathy. "If the fellow knocked his worthless head off, I should not be sorry," the widower murmured to me. Indeed, the tone of the Captain's voice, his *ton*, and his manners in general, were specially odious to Mr. Lovel, who could put up with the tyranny of women, but revolted against the vulgarity and assumption of certain men.

As yet nothing had been said about the morning's quarrel. Here we were all sitting with a sword hanging over our heads, smiling and chatting, and talking cookery, politics, the weather, and what not.

essy was perfectly cool and dignified at tea. Danger or doubt did ot seem to affect *her*. If she had been ordered for execution at the nd of the evening she would have made the tea, played her eethoven, answered questions in her usual voice, and glided about om one to another with her usual dignified calm, until the hour of ecapitation came, when she would have made her curtsey, and gone ut and had the amputation performed quite quietly and neatly. I dmired her, I was frightened before her. The cold snake crept ıore than ever down my back as I meditated on her. I made such wful blunders at whist that even good Mrs. Bonnington lost her emper with her fourteen shillings. Miss Prior would have played er hand out, and never made a fault, you may be sure. She retired t her accustomed hour. Mrs. Bonnington had her glass of negus, nd withdrew too. Lovel keeping his eyes sternly on the Captain, hat officer could only get a little sherry and seltzer, and went to bed ober. Lady Baker folded Lovel in her arms, a process to which my ıoor friend very humbly submitted. Everybody went to bed, and no ıles were told of the morning's doings. There was a respite, and no xecution could take place till to-morrow at any rate. Put on thy ıightcap, Damocles, and slumber for to-night at least. Thy slumbers ıill not be cut short by the awful Chopper of Fate.

Perhaps you may ask what need had *I* to be alarmed? Nothing ıould happen to me. I was not going to lose a governess's place. Well, if I must tell the truth, I had not acted with entire candour in he matter of Bessy's appointment. In recommending her to Lovel ınd the late Mrs. L., I had answered for her probity, and so forth, vith all my might. I had described the respectability of her family, ıer father's campaigns, her grandfather's (old Dr. Sargent's) celebrated ıermons; and had enlarged with the utmost eloquence upon the earning and high character of her uncle, the Master of Boniface, and he deserved regard he bore his niece. But that part of Bessy's ɔiography which related to the Academy I own I had not touched ıpon. *A quoi bon?* Would every gentleman or lady like to have everything told about him or her? I had kept the Academy dark then; and so had brave Dick Bedford the butler; and should that miscreant Captain reveal the secret, I knew there would be an awful commotion in the building. I should have to incur Lovel's not unjust reproaches for *suppressio veri*, and the anger of those two *viragines*, the grandmothers of Lovel's children. I was more afraid

of the women than of him, though conscience whispered me that I had not acted quite rightly by my friend.

When, then, the bed-candles were lighted, and every one said good-night, "Oh! Captain Baker," say I, gaily, and putting on a confoundedly hypocritical grin, "if you will come into my room, I will give you that book.

"What book?" says Baker.

"The book we were talking of this morning."

"Hang me, if I know what you mean," says he. And luckily for me, Lovel, giving a shrug of disgust, and a good-night to me, stalked out of the room, bed-candle in hand. No doubt, he thought his wretch of a brother-in-law did not well remember after dinner what he had done or said in the morning.

As I now had the Blacksheep to myself, I said calmly, "You are quite right. There was no talk about a book at all, Captain Baker. But I wished to see you alone, and impress upon you my earnest wish that everything which occurred this morning—mind, *everything*—should be considered as strictly private, and should be confided to *no person whatever*—you understand?—to no person."

"Confound me," Baker breaks out, "if I understand what you mean by your books and your 'strictly private.' I shall speak what I choose—hang me!"

"In that case, sir," I said, "will you have the goodness to send a friend of yours to my friend Captain Fitzboodle? I must consider the matter as personal between ourselves. You insulted—and, as I find now, for the second time—a lady whose relations to me you know. You have given neither to her, nor to me, the apology to which we are both entitled. You refuse even to promise to be silent regarding a painful scene which was occasioned by your own brutal and cowardly behaviour; and you must abide by the consequences, sir! you must abide by the consequences!" And I glared at him over my flat candlestick.

"Curse me!—and hang me!—and," &c. &c. &c. he says, "if I know what all this is about. What the dooce do you talk to *me* about books, and about silence, and apologies, and sending Captain Fitzboodle to me? *I* don't want to see Captain Fitzboodle—great fat brute! *I* know him perfectly well."

"Hush!" say I, "here's Bedford." In fact, Dick appeared at this juncture, to close the house and put the lamps out.

But Captain Clarence only spoke or screamed louder. "What do I care about who hears me? That fellow insulted me already to-day, and I'd have pitched his life out of him, only I was down, and I'm so confounded weak and nervous, and just out of my fever—and—and hang it all! what are you driving at, Mr. What's-your-name?" And the wretched little creature cries almost as he speaks.

"Once for all, will you agree that the affair about which we spoke shall go no further?" I say, as stern as Draco.

"I shan't say anythin' about it. I wish you'd leave me alone, you fellows, and not come botherin'. I wish I could get a glass of brandy-and-water up in my bedroom. I tell you I can't sleep without it," whimpers the wretch.

"Sorry I laid hands on you, sir," says Bedford, sadly. "It wasn't worth the while. Go to bed, and I'll get you something warm."

"Will you, though? I couldn't sleep without it. Do now—do now! and I won't say anythin'—I won't now—on the honour of a gentleman, I won't. Good-night, Mr. What-d'-ye-call." And Bedford leads the helot to his chamber.

"I've got him in bed; and I've given him a dose; and I put some laudanum in it. He ain't been out. He has not had much to-day," says Bedford, coming back to my room, with his face ominously pale.

"You have given him laudanum?" I ask.

"*Sawbones* gave him some yesterday,—told me to give him a little—forty drops," growls Bedford.

Then the gloomy major-domo puts a hand into each waistcoat pocket, and looks at me. "You want to fight for her, do you, sir? Calling out, and that sort of game? Phoo!"—and he laughs scornfully.

"The little miscreant is too despicable, I own," say I, "and it's absurd for a peaceable fellow like me to talk about powder and shot at this time of day. But what could I do?"

"I say it's SHE ain't worth it," says Bedford, lifting up both clenched fists out of the waistcoat pockets.

"What do you mean, Dick?" I ask.

"She's humbugging you,—she's humbugging me,—she's humbugging everybody," roars Dick. "Look here, sir!" and out of one of the clenched fists he flings a paper down on the table.

"What is it?" I ask. It's her handwriting. I see the neat trim lines on the paper.

"It's not to you; nor yet to me," says Bedford.

"Then how dare you read it, sir?" I ask, all of a tremble.

"It's to him. It's to Sawbones," hisses out Bedford. "Sawbones dropt it as he was getting into his gig; and I read it. *I* ain't going to make no bones about whether it's wrote to me or not. She tells him how you asked her to marry you. (Ha!) That's how I came to know it. And do you know what she calls you, and what *he* calls you,—that castor-hoil beast? And do you know what she says of you? That you hadn't pluck to stand by her to-day. There,—it's all down under her hand and seal. You may read it, or not, if you like. And if poppy or mandragora will medicine you to sleep afterwards. I just recommend you to take it. *I* shall go and get a drop out of the Captain's bottle—I shall."

And he leaves me, and the fatal paper on the table.

Now, suppose you had been in my case—would you, or would you not, have read the paper? Suppose there is some news—bad news—about the woman you love, will you, or will you not, hear it? Was Othello a rogue because he let Iago speak to him? There was the paper. It lay there glimmering under the light, with all the house quiet.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CECILIA'S SUCCESSOR.

MONSIEUR ET HONORÉ LECTEUR! I see, as perfectly as if you were sitting opposite to me, the scorn depicted on your noble countenance when you read my confession that I, Charles Batchelor, Esquire, did burglariously enter the premises of Edward Drencher, Esquire, M.R.C.S.I. (phew! the odious pestle-grinder, I never could bear him!) and break open, and read a certain letter, his property. I may have been wrong, but I am candid. I tell my misdeeds; some fellows hold their tongues. Besides, my good man, consider the temptation, and the horrid insight into the paper which Bedford's report had already given me. Would *you* like to be told that the girl of your heart was playing fast and loose with it, had none of her own, or had given hers to another? I don't want to make a Mrs. Robin Gray of any woman, and merely because "her mither presses her sair" to marry against her will. "If Miss Prior," thought I, "prefers this lint-scraper to me, ought I to baulk her? He is younger, and stronger, certainly, than myself. Some people may consider him handsome. (By the way, what a remarkable thing it is about many women, that, in affairs of the heart, they don't seem to care or understand whether a man is a gentleman or not.) It may be it is my superior fortune and social station which may induce

Elizabeth to waver in her choice between me and my bleeding, bolusing, tooth-drawing rival. If so, and I am only taken from mercenary considerations, what a pretty chance of subsequent happiness do either of us stand! Take the vaccinator, girl, if thou preferrest him! I know what it is to be crossed in love already. It's hard, but I can bear it! I ought to know, I must know, I *will* know what is in that paper!" So saying, as I pace round and round the table where the letter lies flickering white under the midnight taper, I stretch out my hand—I seize the paper—I——well, I own it—there—yes—I took it, and I read it.

Or rather, I may say, I read that part of IT which the bleeder and blisterer had flung down. It was but a fragment of a letter—a fragment—oh! how bitter to swallow! A lump of Epsom salt could not have been more disgusting. It appeared (from Bedford's statement) that Æsculapius, on getting into his gig, had allowed this scrap of paper to whisk out of his pocket—the rest he read, no doubt, under the eyes of the writer. Very likely, during the perusal, he had taken and squeezed the false hand which wrote the lines. Very likely the first part of the *precious document* contained compliments to him—from the horrible context I judge so—compliments to that vendor of leeches and bandages, into whose heart I dare say I wished ten thousand lancets might be stuck, as I perused the FALSE ONE'S wheedling address to him! So ran the document. How well every word of it was engraven on my anguished heart! If page *three*, which I suppose was about the bit of the letter which I got, was as it was—what must pages *one* and *two* have been? The dreadful document began, then, thus:—

"——dear hair in the locket, which I shall *ever* wear for the sake of *him who gave it*"—(dear hair! indeed—disgusting carrots! She should have been ashamed to call it "dear hair")—"for the sake of him who gave it, and whose *bad temper* I shall pardon, because I think in spite of his faults he is a *little fond* of his poor Lizzie! Ah, Edward! how *could* you go on so the last time about poor Mr. B.! Can you imagine that I can ever have more than a filial regard for the kind old gentleman?" (*Il était question de moi, ma parole d'honneur. I* was the kind old gentleman!) "I have known him since my childhood. He was intimate in our family in earlier and happier days; made our house his home; and, I must say, was most kind to all of us children. If he has vanities, you naughty boy, is he

the only one of his sex who is vain? Can you fancy that such an old creature (an *old muff*, as you call him, you wicked, satirical man!) could ever make an impression on my heart? No, sir!" (Aha! So I was an old muff, was I?) "Though I don't wish to make *you* vain too, or that other people should laugh at you, as you do at poor dear Mr. B., I think, sir, you need but look *in your glass* to see that you need not be afraid of such a rival as *that*. You fancy he is attentive to me? If you looked only a little angrily at him, he would fly back to London. To-day, when your *horrid little patient* did presume to offer to take my hand, when I boxed his little wicked ears and sent him *spinning* to the end of the room—poor Mr. Batch was so *frightened* that he did not *dare* to come into the room, and I saw him peeping behind a statue on the lawn, and he would not come in until the *servants arrived*. Poor man! We cannot all of us have courage like *a certain Edward*, who I know is as *bold as a lion*. Now, sir, you must not be quarrelling with that wretched little captain for being rude. I have shown him that I can very well *take care of myself*. I knew the *odious thing* the first moment I set eyes on him, though he had forgotten me. Years ago I met him, and I remember he was equally *rude and tips*——"

Here the letter was torn. Beyond "*tips*" it did not go. But that was enough, wasn't it? To this woman I had offered a gentle and manly, I may say a kind and tender heart—I had offered four hundred a year in funded property, besides my house in Devonshire Street, Bloomsbury—and she preferred *Edward*, forsooth, at the sign of the Gallipot: and may ten thousand pestles smash my brains!

You may fancy what a night I had after reading that scrap. I promise you I did not sleep much. I heard the hours toll as I kept vigil. I lay amidst shattered capitals, broken shafts of the tumbled palace which I had built in imagination—oh! how bright and stately! I sat amongst the ruins of my own happiness, surrounded by the murdered corpses of innocent-visioned domestic joys. Tick—tock! Moment after moment I heard on the clock the clinking footsteps of wakeful grief. I fell into a doze towards morning, and dreamed that I was dancing with Glorvina, when I woke with a start, finding Bedford arrived with my shaving-water, and opening the shutters. When he saw my haggard face he wagged his head.

"You *have* read it, I see, sir," says he.

"Yes, Dick," groaned I, out of bed, "I have swallowed it." And

I laughed I may say a fiendish laugh. "And now I have taken it, not poppy nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups in his shop (hang him) will be able to medicine me to sleep for some time to come!"

"She has no heart, sir. I don't think she cares for t'other chap much," groans the gloomy butler. "She can't, after having known *us*"—and my companion in grief, laying down my hot-water jug, retreats.

I did not cut any part of myself with my razor. I shaved quite calmly. I went to the family at breakfast. My impression is I was sarcastic and witty. I smiled most kindly at Miss Prior when she came in. Nobody could have seen from my outward behaviour that anything was wrong within. I was an apple. Could you inspect the worm at my core? No, no. Somebody, I think old Baker, complimented me on my good looks. I was a smiling lake. Could you see on my placid surface, amongst my sheeny water-lilies, that a corpse was lying under my cool depths? "A bit of devilled chicken?" "No, thank you. By the way, Lovel, I think I must go to town to-day." "You'll come back to dinner, of course?" "Well—no." "Oh, stuff! You promised me to-day and to-morrow. Robinson, Brown, and Jones are coming to-morrow, and you must be here to meet them." Thus we prattle on. I answer, I smile, I say, "Yes, if you please, another cup," or, "Be so good as to hand the muffin," or what not. But I am dead. I feel as if I am under ground, and buried. Life, and tea, and clatter, and muffins are going on, of course; and daisies spring, and the sun shines on the grass whilst I am under it. Ah, dear me! it's very cruel: it's very, very lonely: it's very odd! I don't belong to the world any more. I have done with it. I am shelved away. But my spirit returns and flitters through the world, which it has no longer anything to do with: and my ghost, as it were, comes and smiles at my own tombstone. Here lies Charles Batchelor, the Unloved One. Oh! alone, alone, alone! Why, Fate! didst thou ordain that I should be companionless? Tell me where the Wandering Jew is, that I may go and sit with him. Is there any place at a lighthouse vacant? Who knows where is the Island of Juan Fernandez? Engage me a ship and take me there at once. Mr. R. Crusoe, I think? My dear Robinson, have the kindness to hand me over your goatskin cap, breeches, and umbrella. Go home, and leave *me* here. Would you know who is the

solitariest man on earth? That man am I. Was that cutlet which I ate at breakfast anon, was that lamb which frisked on the mead last week (beyond yon wall where the unconscious cucumber lay basking which was to form his sauce)—I say, was that lamb made so tender, that I might eat him? And my heart, then? Poor heart! wert thou so softly constituted only that women might stab thee? So I am a Muff, am I? And she will always wear a lock of his "dear hair," will she? Ha! ha! The men on the omnibus looked askance as they saw me laugh. They thought it was from Hanwell, not Putney, I was escaping. Escape? Who can escape? I went into London. I went to the clubs. Jawkins, of course, was there; and my impression is that he talked as usual. I took another omnibus, and went back to Putney. "I will go back and revisit my grave," I thought. It is said that ghosts loiter about their former haunts a good deal when they are first dead; flit wistfully among their old friends and companions, and, I dare say, expect to hear a plenty of conversation and friendly tearful remark about themselves. But suppose they return, and find nobody talking of them at all? Or suppose, Hamlet (Père, and Royal Dane) comes back and finds Claudius and Gertrude very comfortable over a piece of cold meat, or what not? Is the late gentleman's present position as a ghost a very pleasant one? Crow, Cocks! Quick, Sundawn! Open, Trap-door! *Allons:* it's best to pop underground again. So I am a Muff, am I? What a curious thing that walk up the hill to the house was! What a different place Shrublands was yesterday to what it is to-day! Has the sun lost its light, and the flowers their bloom, and the joke its sparkle, and the dish its savour? Why, bless my soul! what is Lizzy herself—only an ordinary woman—freckled certainly—incorrigibly dull, and without a scintillation of humour: and you mean to say, Charles Batchelor, that your heart once beat about *that* woman? Under the intercepted letter of that cold assassin, my heart had fallen down dead, irretrievably dead. I remember, *àpropos* of the occasion of my first death, that perpetrated by Glorvina—on my second visit to Dublin—with what a strange sensation I walked under some trees in the Phœnix Park beneath which it had been my custom to meet my False One Number I. There were the trees—there were the birds singing—there was the bench on which we used to sit—the same, but how different! The trees had a different foliage, exquisite amaranthine; the birds sang a song paradisiacal;

the bench was a bank of roses and fresh flowers, which young Love twined in fragrant chaplets around the statue of Glorvina. Roses and fresh flowers? Rheumatisms and flannel-waistcoats, you silly old man! Foliage and Song? O namby-pamby driveller! A statue? —a doll, thou twaddling old dullard!—a doll with carmine cheeks, and a heart stuffed with bran——I say, on the night preceding that ride to and from Putney, I had undergone death—in that omnibus I had been carried over to t'other side of the Stygian shore. I returned but as a passionless ghost, remembering my life-days, but not feeling any more. Love was dead, Elizabeth! Why, the doctor came, and partook freely of lunch, and I was not angry. Yesterday I called him names, and hated him, and was jealous of him. To-day I felt no rivalship; and no envy at his success; and no desire to supplant him. No—I swear—not the slightest wish to make Elizabeth mine if she would. I might have cared for her yesterday—yesterday I had a heart. Psha! my good sir or madam. You sit by me at dinner. Perhaps you are handsome, and use your eyes. Ogle away. Don't baulk yourself, pray. But if you fancy I care a three-penny-piece about you—or for your eyes—or for your bonny brown hair—or for your sentimental remarks, sidelong warbled—or for your praise to (not of) my face—or for your satire behind my back—ah me!—how mistaken you are! *Peine perdue, ma chère dame!* The digestive organs are still in good working order—but the heart? *Caret.*

I was perfectly civil to Mr. Drencher, and, indeed, wonder to think how in my irritation I had allowed myself to apply (mentally) any sort of disagreeable phrases to a most excellent and deserving and good-looking young man, who is beloved by the poor, and has won the just confidence of an extensive circle of patients. I made no sort of remark to Miss Prior, except about the weather and the flowers in the garden. I was bland, easy, rather pleasant, not too high-spirited, you understand.—No: I vow you could not have seen a nerve wince, or the slightest alteration in my demeanour. I helped the two old dowagers; I listened to their twaddle; I gaily wiped up with my napkin three-quarters of a glass of sherry which Popham flung over my trousers. I would defy you to know that I had gone through the ticklish operation of an excision of the heart a few hours previously. Heart—pooh! I saw Miss Prior's lip quiver. Without a word between us, she knew perfectly well that all was over as

regarded her late humble servant. *She* winced once or twice. While Drencher was busy with his plate, the grey eyes cast towards me interjectional looks of puzzled entreaty. *She*, I say, winced; and I give you my word I did not care a fig whether she was sorry, or pleased, or happy, or going to be hung. And I can't give a better proof of my utter indifference about the matter, than the fact that I wrote two or three copies of verses descriptive of my despair. They appeared, you may perhaps remember, in one of the annuals of those days, and were generally attributed to one of the most sentimental of our young poets. I remember the reviews said they were "replete with emotion," "full of passionate and earnest feeling," and so forth. Feeling, indeed!—ha! ha! "Passionate outbursts of a grief-stricken heart!"—Passionate scrapings of a fiddlestick, my good friend. "Lonely" of course rhymes with "only," and "gushes" with "blushes," and "despair" with "hair," and so on. Despair is perfectly compatible with a good dinner, I promise you. Hair is false: hearts are false. Grapes may be sour, but claret is good, my masters. Do you suppose I am going to cry my eyes out, because Chloe's are turned upon Strephon? If you find any whimpering in mine, may they never wink at a bee's-wing again.

When the Doctor rose presently, saying he would go and see the gardener's child, who was ill, and casting longing looks at Miss Prior, I assure you I did not feel a tittle of jealousy, though Miss Bessy actually followed Mr. Drencher into the lawn, under the pretext of calling back Miss Cissy, who had run thither without her bonnet.

"Now, Lady Baker, which was right? you or I?" asks bonny Mrs. Bonnington, wagging her head towards the lawn where this couple of innocents were disporting.

"You thought there was an affair between Miss Prior and the medical gentleman," I say, smiling. "It was no secret, Mrs. Bonnington."

"Yes, but there were others who were a little smitten in that quarter, too," says Lady Baker; and she in turn wags *her* old head towards me.

"You mean me?" I answer, as innocent as a new-born babe. "I am a burnt child, Lady Baker; I have been at the fire, and am already thoroughly done, thank you. One of your charming sex jilted me some years ago; and once is quite enough, I am much obliged to you."

This I said, not because it was true; in fact, it was the reverse of truth; but if I choose to lie about my own affairs, pray, why not? And though a strictly truth-telling man generally, when I do lie, I promise you I do it boldly and well.

"If, as I gather from Mrs. Bonnington, Mr. Drencher and Miss Prior like each other, I wish my old friend joy. I wish Mr. Drencher joy with all my heart. The match seems to me excellent. He is a deserving, a clever, and a handsome young fellow; and I am sure, ladies, you can bear witness to *her* goodness, after all you have known of her."

"My dear Batchelor," says Mrs. Bonnington, still smiling and winking, "I don't believe one single word you say—not one single word!" And she looks infinitely pleased as she speaks.

"Oh!" cries Lady Baker, "my good Mrs. Bonnington, you are always match-making—don't contradict me. You know you thought——"

"Oh, please don't," cries Mrs. B.

"I will. She thought, Mr. Batchelor, she actually thought that our son, that my Cecilia's husband, was smitten by the governess. I should like to have seen him dare!" and her flashing eyes turn towards the late Mrs. Lovel's portrait, with its faded simper leering over the harp. "The idea that any woman could succeed that angel, indeed!"

"Indeed, I don't envy her," I said.

"You don't mean, Batchelor, that my Frederick would not make any woman happy?" cries the Bonnington. "He is only seven-and-thirty, very young for his age, and the most affectionate of creatures. I am surprised, and it's most cruel, and most unkind of you, to say that you don't envy any woman that marries my boy!"

"My dear good Mrs. Bonnington, you quite misapprehend me," I remark.

"Why, when his late wife was alive," goes on Mrs. B——, sobbing, "you know with what admirable sweetness and gentleness he bore her—her—bad temper—excuse me, Lady Baker!"

"Oh, pray, abuse my departed angel!" cries the Baker; "say that your son should marry and forget her—say that those darlings should be made to forget their mother. She was a woman of birth, and a woman of breeding, and a woman of family, and the Bakers came in with the Conqueror, Mrs. Bonnington——"

"I think I heard of one in the court of Pharaoh," I interposed.

"And to say that a Baker is not worthy of a Lovel is *pretty* news ndeed! Do you hear *that*, Clarence?"

"Hear what, ma'am?" says Clarence, who enters at this junc-ure. "You're speakin' loud enough—though blesht if I hear two h-shyllables."

"You wretched boy, you have been smoking!"

"Shmoking—haven't I?" says Clarence with a laugh; "and I've een at the 'Five Bells,' and I've been having a game of billiards ith an old friend of mine," and he lurches towards a decanter.

"Ah! don't drink any more, my child!" cries the mother.

"I'm as sober as a judge, I tell you. You leave so precious ittle in the bottle at dinner, that I must get it when I can, mustn't I, Batchelor, old boy? We had a row yesterday, hadn't we? No, it vas sugar-baker. I'm not angry—you're not angry. Bear no malish. Here's your health, old boy!"

The unhappy gentleman drank his bumper of sherry, and, tossing is hair off his head, said—"Where's the governess—where's Bessy Bellenden? Who's that kickin' me under the table, I say?"

"Where is who?" asks his mother.

"Bessy Bellenden—the governess—that's her real name. Known ier these ten years. Used to dansh at Prinsh's Theatre. Remember ier in the corps-de-ballet. Ushed to go behind the shenes. Dooshid retty girl!" maunders out the tipsy youth; and as the unconscious ubject of his mischievous talk enters the room, again he cries out, 'Come and sit by me, Bessy Bellenden, I say!"

The matrons rose with looks of horror in their faces. "A ballet-lancer!" cries Mrs. Bonnington. "A ballet-dancer!" echoes Lady Baker. "Young woman, is this true?"

"The Bulbul and the Roshe—hay?" laughs the Captain. "Don't ou remember you and Fosbery in blue and shpangles? Always all ight, though, Bellenden was. Fosbery washn't: but Bellenden was. Give you every credit for that, Bellenden. Boxsh my earsh. Bear o malish—no—no—malish! Get some more sherry, you—whatsh our name—Bedford, butler—and I'll pay you the money I owe ou." And he laughs his wild laugh, utterly unconscious of the effect e is producing. Bedford stands staring at him as pale as death. Poor Miss Prior is as white as marble. Wrath, terror, and wonder are n the countenances of the dowagers. It is an awful scene!

"Mr. Batchelor knows that it was to help my family I did it," says the poor governess.

"Yes, by George! and nobody can say a word against her," bursts in Dick Bedford, with a sob; "and she is as honest as any woman here."

"Pray, who told you to put your oar in?" cries the tipsy Captain.

"And you knew that this person was on the stage, and you introduced her into my son's family? Oh, Mr. Batchelor, Mr. Batchelor, I didn't think it of you! Don't speak to me, Miss!" cries the flurried Bonnington.

"You brought this woman to the children of my adored Cecilia?" calls out the other dowager. "Serpent, leave the room! Pack your trunks, viper! and quit the house this instant. Don't touch her, Cissy. Come to me, my blessing. Go away, you horrid wretch!"

"She ain't a horrid wretch; and when I was ill she was very good to us," breaks in Pop, with a roar of tears: "and you shan't go, Miss Prior—my dear, pretty Miss Prior. You shan't go!" and the child rushes up to the governess, and covers her neck with tears and kisses.

"Leave her, Popham my darling blessing!—leave that woman!" cries Lady Baker.

"I won't, you old beast!—and she sha-a-an't go. And I wish you was dead—and, my dear, you shan't go, and Pa shan't let you!"—shouts the boy.

"Oh, Popham, if Miss Prior has been naughty, Miss Prior must go!" says Cecilia, tossing up her head.

"Spoken like my daughter's child!" cries Lady Baker: and little Cissy, having flung her little stone, looks as if she had performed a very virtuous action.

"God bless you, Master Pop,—you are a trump, you are!" says Mr. Bedford.

"Yes, that I am, Bedford; and she shan't go, shall she?" cries the boy.

But Bessy stooped down sadly, and kissed him. "Yes, I must, dear," she said.

"Don't touch him! Come away, sir! Come away from her this moment!" shrieked the two mothers.

"I nursed him through the scarlet fever, when his own mother would not come near him," says Elizabeth, gently.

"I'm blest if she didn't," sobs Bedford—"and—bub—bub—bless you, Master Pop!"

"That child is wicked enough, and headstrong enough, and rude enough already!" exclaims Lady Baker. "I desire, young woman, you will not pollute him further!"

"That's a hard word to say to an honest woman, ma'am," says Bedford.

"Pray, Miss, are you engaged to the butler, too?" hisses out the dowager.

"There's very little the matter with Barnet's child—only teeth. . . . . What on earth has happened? My dear Lizzy—my dear Miss Prior—what is it?" cries the Doctor, who enters from the garden at this juncture.

"Nothing has happened, only this young woman has appeared in a new *character*," says Lady Baker. "My son has just informed us that Miss Prior danced upon the stage, Mr. Drencher; and if you think such a person is a fit companion for your mother and sisters, who attend a place of Christian worship, I believe—I wish you joy."

"Is this—is this—true?" asks the Doctor, with a look of bewilderment.

"Yes, it is true," sighs the girl.

"And you never told me, Elizabeth?" groans the Doctor.

"She's as honest as any woman here," calls out Bedford. "She gave all the money to her family."

"It wasn't fair not to tell me. It wasn't fair," sobs the Doctor. And he gives her a ghastly parting look, and turns his back.

"I say, you—Hi! What-d'you-call-'im? Sawbones!" shrieks out Captain Clarence. "Come back, I say. She's all right, I say. Upon my honour, now, she's all right."

"Miss P—— shouldn't have kept this from me. My mother and sisters are Dissenters, and very strict. I couldn't ask a party into my family who has been—who has been——I wish you good morning," says the Doctor, and stalks away.

"And now, will you please to get your things ready, and go, too?" continues Lady Baker. "My dear Mrs. Bonnington, you think——"

"Certainly, certainly, she must go!" cries Mrs. Bonnington.

"Don't go till Lovel comes home, Miss. *These* ain't your mistresses. Lady Baker don't pay your salary. If you go, I go, too. There!"

calls out Bedford, and mumbles something in her ear about "the end of the world."

"You go, too; and a good riddance, you insolent brute!" exclaims the dowager.

"Oh, Captain Clarence! you have made a pretty morning's work," I say.

"I don't know what the dooce all the sherry—all the shinty's about," says the Captain, playing with the empty decanter. "Gal's a very good gal—pretty gal. If she choosesh dansh shport her family, why the doosh shouldn't she dansh shport a family?"

"That is exactly what I recommend this person to do," says Lady Baker, tossing up her head. "And now I will thank you to leave the room. Do you hear?"

As poor Elizabeth obeyed this order, Bedford darted after her: and I know ere she had gone five steps he had offered her his savings and everything he had. She might have had mine yesterday. But she had deceived me. She had played fast and loose with me. She had misled me about this Doctor. I could trust her no more. My love of yesterday was dead, I say. That vase was broken, which never could be mended. She knew all was over between us. She did not once look at me as she left the room.

The two dowagers—one of them, I think, a little alarmed at her victory—left the house, and for once went away in the same barouche. The young maniac who had been the cause of the mischief staggered away, I know not whither.

About four o'clock, poor little Pinhorn, the children's maid, came to me, well nigh choking with tears, as she handed me a letter. "She's goin' away—and she saved both them children's lives, she did. And she've wrote to you, sir. And Bedford's a-goin'. And I'll give warnin', I will, too!" And the weeping handmaiden retires, leaving me, perhaps somewhat frightened, with the letter in my hand.

"Dear sir," she said—"I may write you a line of thanks and farewell. I shall go to my mother. I shall soon find another place. Poor Bedford, who has a generous heart, told me that he had given you a letter of mine to Mr. D——. I saw this morning that you knew everything. I can only say now that for all your long kindnesses and friendship to my family I am always your sincere and grateful—E. P."

Yes: that was all. I think she *was* grateful. But she had not

Lowell's Mothers.

been candid with me, nor with the poor surgeon. I had no anger: far from it: a great deal of regard and goodwill, nay admiration, for the intrepid girl who had played a long, hard part very cheerfully and bravely. But my foolish little flicker of love had blazed up and gone out in a day; I knew that she never could care for me. In that dismal, wakeful night, after reading the letter, I had thought her character and story over, and seen to what a life of artifice and dissimulation necessity had compelled her. I did not blame her. In such circumstances, with such a family, how could she be frank and open? Poor thing! poor thing! Do we know anybody? Ah! dear me, we are most of us very lonely in the world. You who have any who love you, cling to them, and thank God. I went into the hall towards evening: her poor trunks and packages were there, and the little nurserymaid weeping over them. The sight unmanned me; and I believe I cried myself. Poor Elizabeth! And with these small chests you recommence your life's lonely voyage! I gave the girl a couple of sovereigns. She sobbed a God bless me! and burst out crying more desperately than ever. Thou hast a kind heart, little Pinhorn!

"'Miss Prior—to be called for.' Whose trunks are these?" says Lovel, coming from the city. The dowagers drove up at the same moment.

"Didn't you see us from the omnibus, Frederick?" cries her ladyship, coaxingly. "We followed behind you all the way!"

"We were in the barouche, my dear," remarks Mrs. Bonnington, rather nervously.

"Whose trunks are these?—what's the matter?—and what's the girl crying for?" asks Lovel.

"Miss Prior is a-going away," sobs Pinhorn.

"Miss Prior going? Is this your doing, my Lady Baker?—or yours, mother?" the master of the house says, sternly.

"She is going, my love, because she cannot stay in this family," says mamma.

"That woman is no fit companion for my angel's children, Frederick!" cries Lady B.

"That person has deceived us all, my love!" says mamma.

"Deceived?—how? Deceived whom?" continues Mr. Lovel, more and more hotly.

"Clarence, love! come down, dear! Tell Mr. Lovel everything.

Come down and tell him this moment," cries Lady Baker to her son, who at this moment appears on the corridor which was round the hall.

"What's the row now, pray?" And Captain Clarence descends, breaking his shins over poor Elizabeth's trunks, and calling down on them his usual maledictions.

"Tell Mr. Lovel where you saw that—that person, Clarence? Now, sir, listen to my Cecilia's brother!"

"Saw her—saw her in blue and spangles, in the 'Rose and the Bulbul,' at the Prince's Theatre—and a doosid nice-looking girl she was too!" says the Captain.

"There, sir!"

"There, Frederick!" cry the matrons in a breath.

"And what then?" asks Lovel.

"Mercy! you ask, What then, Frederick? Do you know what a theatre is? Tell Frederick what a theatre is, Mr. Batchelor, and that my grandchildren must not be educated by——"

"My grandchildren—my Cecilia's children," shrieks the other, "must not be pol-luted by——"

"Silence!" I say. "Have you a word against her—have you, pray, Baker?"

"No. 'Gad! I never said a word against her," says the Captain. "No, hang me, you know—but——"

"But suppose I knew the fact the whole time?" asks Lovel, with rather a blush on his cheek. "Suppose I knew that she danced to give her family bread? Suppose I knew that she toiled and laboured to support her parents, and brothers and sisters? Suppose I know that out of her pittance she has continued to support them? Suppose I know that she watched my own children through fever and danger? For these reasons I must turn her out of doors, must I? No, by heaven!—No!—Elizabeth!—Miss Prior!—Come down!—Come here, I beg you!"

The governess, arrayed as for departure, at this moment appeared on the corridor running round the hall. As Lovel continued to speak very loud and resolute, she came down looking deadly pale.

Still much excited, the widower went up to her and took her hand. "Dear Miss Prior!" he said—"dear Elizabeth! you have been the best friend of me and mine. You tended my wife in illness, you took care of my children in fever and danger. You have been an admirable sister, daughter in your own family—and for this,

and for these benefits conferred upon us, my relatives—my mother-in-law—would drive you out of my doors! It shall not be!—by heavens, it shall not be!"

You should have seen little Bedford sitting on the governess's box, shaking his fist, and crying "Hurrah!" as his master spoke. By this time the loud voices and the altercation in the hall had brought a half-dozen of servants from their quarters into the hall. "Go away, all of you!" shouts Lovel; and the domestic *posse* retires, Bedford being the last to retreat, and nodding approval at his master as he backs out of the room.

"You are very good, and kind, and generous, sir," says the pale Elizabeth, putting a handkerchief to her eyes. "But without the confidence of these ladies, I must not stay, Mr. Lovel. God bless you for your goodness to me. I must, if you please, return to my mother."

The worthy gentleman looked fiercely round at the two elder women, and again seizing the governess's hand, said—"Elizabeth! dear Elizabeth! I implore you not to go! If you love the children——"

"Oh, sir!" (A cambric veil covers Miss Prior's emotion, and the expression of her face, on this ejaculation.)

"If you love the children," gasps out the widower, "stay with them. If you have a regard for—for their father"—(Timanthes, where is thy pocket-handkerchief?)—"remain in this house, with such a title as none can question. Be the mistress of it."

"His mistress—and before me!" screams Lady Baker. "Mrs. Bonnington, this depravity is monstrous!"

"Be my wife, dear Elizabeth!" the widower continues. "Continue to watch over the children, who shall be motherless no more."

"Frederick! Frederick! haven't they got *us?*" shrieks one of the old ladies.

"Oh, my poor dear Lady Baker!" says Mrs. Bonnington.

"Oh, my poor dear Mrs. Bonnington!" says Lady Baker.

"Frederick, listen to your mother," implores Mrs. Bonnington.

"To your mothers," sobs Lady Baker.

And they both go down on their knees, and I heard a boohoo of a guffaw behind the green-baized servants' door, where I have no doubt Mons. Bedford was posted.

"Ah, Batchelor! dear Batchelor, speak to him!" cries good

Mrs. Bonny. "We are praying this child, Batchelor—this child whom you used to know at college, and when he was a good, gentle, obedient boy. You have influence with my poor Frederick. Exert it for his heart-broken mother's sake; and you shall have my bubble-uble-essings, you shall."

"My dear good lady," I exclaim—not liking to see the kind soul in grief.

"Send for Doctor Straightwaist! Order him to pause in his madness," cries Baker; "or it is I, Cecilia's mother, the mother of that murdered angel, that shall go mad."

"Angel? *Allons!*" I say. "Since his widowhood, you have never given the poor fellow any peace. You have been for ever quarrelling with him. You took possession of his house; bullied his servants; spoiled his children—you did, Lady Baker."

"Sir," cries her ladyship, "you are a low, presuming, vulgar man! Clarence, beat this rude man!"

"Nay," I say, "there must be no more quarrelling to-day. And I am sure Captain Baker will not molest me. Miss Prior, I am delighted that my old friend should have found a woman of good sense, good conduct, good temper—a woman who has had many trials, and borne them with very great patience—to take charge of him, and make him happy. I congratulate you both. Miss Prior has borne poverty so well that I am certain she will bear good fortune, for it *is* good fortune to become the wife of such a loyal, honest, kindly gentleman as Frederick Lovel."

After such a speech as that, I think I may say, *liberavi animam*. Not one word of complaint, you see, not a hint about "Edward," not a single sarcasm, though I might have launched some terrific shots out of my quiver, and have made Lovel and his bride-elect writhe before me. But what is the need of spoiling sport? Shall I growl out of my sulky manger, because my comrade gets the meat? Eat it, happy dog! and be thankful. Would not that bone have choked me if I had tried it? Besides, I am accustomed to disappointment. Other fellows get the prizes which I try for. I am used to run second in the dreary race of love. Second? Psha! Third, Fourth. *Que sçais-je?* There was the Bombay captain in Bess's early days. There was Edward. Here is Frederick. Go to, Charles Batchelor; repine not at fortune: but be content to be Batchelor still. My sister has children. I will be an uncle, a parent

to them. Isn't Edward of the scarlet whiskers distanced? Has not poor Dick Bedford lost the race—poor Dick, who never had a chance, and is the best of us all? Besides, what fun it is to see Lady Baker deposed: think of Mrs. Prior coming in and reigning over her! The purple-faced old fury of a Baker, never will she bully, and rage, and trample more. She must pack up her traps and be off. I know she must. I *can* congratulate Lovel sincerely, and that's the fact.

And here at this very moment, and as if to add to the comicality of the scene, who should appear but mother-in-law No. 2, Mrs. Prior, with her Bluecoat boy, and two or three of her children, who had been invited, or had invited themselves, to drink tea with Lovel's young ones, as their custom was whenever they could procure an invitation. Master Prior had a fine "copy" under his arm, which he came to show to his patron Lovel. His mamma, entirely ignorant of what had happened, came fawning in with her old poke-bonnet, her old pocket, that vast depository of all sorts of stores, her old umbrella, and her usual dreary smirk. She made her obeisance to the matrons,—she led up her Bluecoat boy to Mr. Lovel, in whose office she hoped to find a clerk's place for her lad, on whose very coat and waistcoat she had designs whilst they were yet on his back: and she straightway began business with the dowagers—

"My lady, I hope your ladyship is quite well?" (a curtsey.) "Dear, kind Mrs. Bonnington! I came to pay my duty to you, mum. This is Louisa, my lady, the great girl for whom your ladyship so kindly promised the gown. And this is my little girl, Mrs. Bonnington, mum, please; and this is my big Blue. Go and speak to dear, kind Mr. Lovel, Gus, our dear good friend and protector,—the son and son-in-law of these dear ladies. Look, sir, he has brought his copy to show you; and it's creditable to a boy of his age, isn't it, Mr. Batchelor? You can say, who know so well what writing is, and my kind services to you, sir—and—Elizabeth, Lizzie, my dear! where's your spectacles, you—you——"

Here she stopped, and looking alarmed at the group, at the boxes, at the blushing Lovel, at the pale countenance of the governess, "Gracious goodness!" she said, "what has happened? Tell me, Lizzy, what is it?"

"Is this collusion, pray?" says ruffled Mrs. Bonnington.

"Collusion, dear Mrs. Bonnington?"

"Or insolence?" bawls out my Lady Baker.

"Insolence, your ladyship? What—what is it? What are these boxes—Lizzy's boxes? Ah!" the mother broke out with a scream, "you've not sent the poor girl away? Oh! my poor child—my poor children!"

"The Prince's Theatre has come out, Mrs. Prior," here said I.

The mother clasps her meagre hands. "It wasn't the darling's fault. It was to help her poor father in poverty. It was I who forced her to it. Oh, ladies! ladies!—don't take the bread out of the mouth of these poor orphans!"—and genuine tears rained down her yellow cheeks.

"Enough of this," says Mr. Lovel, haughtily. "Mrs. Prior, your daughter is not going away. Elizabeth has promised to stay with me, and never to leave me—as governess no longer, but as——" and here he takes Miss Prior's hand.

"His wife! Is this—is this true, Lizzy?" gasped the mother.

"Yes, mamma," meekly said Miss Elizabeth Prior.

At this the old woman flung down her umbrella, and uttering a fine scream, folds Elizabeth in her arms, and then runs up to Lovel: "My son! my son!" says she (Lovel's face was not bad, I promise you, at this salutation and salute). "Come here, children!—come, Augustus, Fanny, Louisa, kiss your dear brother, children! And where are yours, Lizzy? Where are Pop and Cissy? Go and look for your little nephew and niece, dears: Pop and Cissy in the school-room, or in the garden, dears. They will be your nephew and niece now. Go and fetch them, I say."

As the young Priors filed off, Mrs. Prior turned to the two other matrons, and spoke to them with much dignity: "Most hot weather, your ladyship, I'm sure! Mr. Bonnington must find it very hot for preaching, Mrs. Bonnington! Lor'! there's that little wretch beating my Johnny on the stairs. Have done, Pop, sir! How ever shall we make those children agree, Elizabeth?"

Quick, come to me, some skilful delineator of the British dowager, and draw me the countenances of Lady Baker and Mrs. Bonnington!

"I call this a jolly game, don't you, Batchelor, old boy?" remarks the Captain to me. "Lady Baker, my dear, I guess your ladyship's nose is out of joint."

"O Cecilia—Cecilia! don't you shudder in your grave?" cries Lady B. "Call my people, Clarence—call Bulkeley—call my maid! Let me go, I say, from this house of horror!" and the old lady

dashed into the drawing-room, where she uttered I know not what incoherent shrieks and appeals before that calm, glazed, simpering portrait of the departed Cecilia.

Now this is a truth, for which I call Lovel, his lady, Mrs. Bonnington, and Captain Clarence Baker, as witnesses. Well, then, whilst Lady B. was adjuring the portrait, it is a fact that a string of Cecilia's harp—which has always been standing in the corner of the room under its shroud of Cordovan leather—a string, I say, of Cecilia's harp cracked, and went off with a loud *bong*, which struck terror into all beholders. Lady Baker's agitation at the incident was awful; I do not like to describe it—not having any wish to say anything tragic in this narrative—though that I *can* write tragedy, plays of mine (of which envious managers never could be got to see the merit) I think will prove, when they appear in my posthumous works.

Baker has always averred that at the moment when the harp-string broke, her heart broke too. But as she lived for many years, and may be alive now for what I know; and as she borrowed money repeatedly from Lovel—he must be acquitted of the charge which she constantly brings against him of hastening her own death, and murdering his first wife Cecilia. "The harp that once in Tara's Halls" used to make such a piteous feeble thrumming, has been carted off I know not whither; and Cecilia's portrait, though it has been removed from the post of honour (where, you conceive, under present circumstances it would hardly be *àpropos*), occupies a very reputable position in the pink room upstairs, which that poor young Clarence inhabited during my visit to Shrublands.

All the house has been altered. There's a fine organ in the hall, on which Elizabeth performs sacred music very finely. As for *my* old room, I will trouble you to smoke *there* under the present government. It is a library now, with many fine and authentic pictures of the Lovel family hanging up in it, the English branch of the house with the wolf crest, and *Gare à la louve* for the motto, and a grand posthumous portrait of a Portuguese officer (Gandish), Elizabeth's late father.

As for dear old Mrs. Bonnington, she, you may be sure, would be easily reconciled to any live mortal who was kind to her, and any plan which should make her son happy; and Elizabeth has quite won her over. Mrs. Prior, on the deposition of the other dowagers, no doubt expected to reign at Shrublands, but in this object I am

not very sorry to say was disappointed. Indeed, I was not a little amused, upon the very first day of her intended reign—that eventful one of which we have been describing the incidents—to see how calmly and gracefully Bessy pulled the throne from under her, on which the old lady was clambering.

Mrs. P. knew the house very well, and everything which it contained; and when Lady Baker drove off with her son and her suite of domestics, Prior dashed through the vacant apartments gleaning what had been left in the flurry of departure—a scarlet feather out of the dowager's room, a shirt-stud and a bottle of hair-oil, the Captain's property. "And now they are gone, and as you can't be alone with him, my dear, I must be with you," says she, coming down to her daughter.

"Of course, mamma, I must be with you," says obedient Elizabeth.

"And there is the pink room, and the blue room, and the yellow room for the boys—and the chintz boudoir for me—I can put them all away, oh, so comfortably!"

"I can come and share Louisa's room, mamma," says Bessy. "It will not be proper for me to stay here at all—until afterwards, you know. Or I can go to my uncle at St. Boniface. Don't you think that will be best, eh, Frederick?"

"Whatever you wish, my dear Lizzy!" says Lovel.

"And I dare say there will be some little alterations made in the house. You talked, you know, of painting, Mr. Lovel: and the children can go to their grandmamma Bonnington. And on our return when the alterations are made we shall always be delighted to see *you*, Mr. Batchelor—our kindest old friend. Shall we not, Frederick?"

"Always, always," said Frederick.

"Come, children, come to your teas," calls out Mrs. P., in a resolute voice.

"Dear Pop, I'm not going away—that is, only for a few days, dear," says Bessy, kissing the boy; "and you will love me, won't you?"

"All right," says the boy. But Cissy said, when the same appeal was made to her: "I shall love my dear mamma!" and makes her new mother-in-law a very polite curtsey.

"I think you had better put off those men you expect to dinner to-morrow, Fred," I say to Lovel.

"I think I had, Batch," says the gentleman.

"Or you can dine with them at the club, you know?" remarks Elizabeth.

"Yes, Bessy."

"And when the children have had their tea I will go with mamma. My boxes are ready, you know," says arch Bessy.

"And you will stay and dine with Mr. Lovel, won't you, Mr. Batchelor?" asks the lady.

It was the dreariest dinner I ever had in my life. No undertaker could be more gloomy than Bedford, as he served us. We tried to talk politics and literature. We drank too much, purposely. Nothing would do. "Hang me, if I can stand this, Lovel," I said, as we sat mum over our third bottle. "I will go back and sleep at my chambers. I was not a little soft upon her myself, that's the truth. Here's her health, and happiness to both of you, with all my heart." And we drained a great bumper apiece, and I left him. He was very happy I should go.

Bedford stood at the gate, as the little pony-carriage came for me in the dusk. "God bless you, sir," says he. "I can't stand it; I shall go too." And he rubbed his hands over his eyes.

He married Mary Pinhorn, and they have emigrated to Melbourne; whence he sent me, three years ago, an affectionate letter, and a smart gold pin from the diggings.

A month afterwards, a cab might have been seen driving from the Temple to Hanover Square: and a month and a day after that drive, an advertisement might have been read in the *Post* and *Times:* "Married, on Thursday, 10th, at St. George's, Hanover Square, by the Reverend the Master of St. Boniface College, Oxbridge, uncle of the bride, Frederick Lovel, Esquire, of Shrublands, Roehampton, to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late Captain Montagu Prior, K.S.F."

We may hear of LOVEL MARRIED some other day, but here is an end of LOVEL THE WIDOWER. *Valete et plaudite,* you good people, who have witnessed the little comedy. Down with the curtain; cover up the boxes; pop out the gas-lights. Ho! cab. Take us home, and let us have some tea, and go to bed. Good-night, my little players. We have been merry together, and we part with soft hearts and somewhat rueful countenances, don't we?

# STORIES.

# THE BEDFORD-ROW CONSPIRACY.*

## CHAPTER I.

OF THE LOVES OF MR. PERKINS AND MISS GORGON, AND OF THE TWO GREAT FACTIONS IN THE TOWN OF OLDBOROUGH.

"MY dear John," cried Lucy, with a very wise look indeed, "it must and shall be so. As for Doughty Street, with our means, a house is out of the question. We must keep three servants, and aunt Biggs says the taxes are one-and-twenty pounds a year."

"I have seen a sweet place at Chelsea," remarked John: "Paradise Row, No. 17,—garden—greenhouse—fifty pounds a year—omnibus to town within a mile."

"What! that I may be left alone all day, and you spend a fortune in driving backward and forward in those horrid breakneck cabs? My darling, I should die there—die of fright, I know I should. Did you not say yourself that the road was not as yet lighted, and that the place swarmed with public-houses and dreadful tipsy Irish bricklayers? Would you kill me, John?"

"My da—arling," said John, with tremendous fondness, clutching Miss Lucy suddenly round the waist, and rapping the hand of that young person violently against his waistcoat,—"My—da—arling, don't say such things, even in a joke. If I objected to the chambers, it is only because you, my love, with your birth and connections, ought to have a house of your own. The chambers are quite large enough, and certainly quite good enough for me." And so after some more sweet parley on the part of these young people, it was agreed

* A story of Charles de Bernard furnished the plot of "The Bedford-Row Conspiracy."

that they should take up their abode, when married, in a part of the House number One hundred and something, Bedford Row.

It will be necessary to explain to the reader that John was no other than John Perkins, Esq., of the Middle Temple, barrister-at-law, and that Miss Lucy was the daughter of the late Captain Gorgon, and Marianne Biggs, his wife. The Captain being of noble connections, younger son of a baronet, cousin to Lord X——, and related to the Y—— family, had angered all his relatives by marrying a very silly, pretty young woman, who kept a ladies'-school at Canterbury. She had six hundred pounds to her fortune, which the Captain laid out in the purchase of a sweet travelling-carriage and dressing-case for himself; and going abroad with his lady, spent several years in the principal prisons of Europe, in one of which he died. His wife and daughter were meantime supported by the contributions of Mrs. Jemima Biggs, who still kept the ladies'-school.

At last a dear old relative—such a one as one reads of in romances—died and left seven thousand pounds apiece to the two sisters, whereupon the elder gave up schooling and retired to London; and the younger managed to live with some comfort and decency at Brussels, upon two hundred and ten pounds per annum. Mrs. Gorgon never touched a shilling of her capital, for the very good reason that it was placed entirely out of her reach; so that when she died, her daughter found herself in possession of a sum of money that is not always to be met with in this world.

Her aunt the baronet's lady, and her aunt the ex-schoolmistress, both wrote very pressing invitations to her, and she resided with each for six months after her arrival in England. Now, for a second time, she had come to Mrs. Biggs, Caroline Place, Mecklenburgh Square. It was under the roof of that respectable old lady that John Perkins, Esq., being invited to take tea, wooed and won Miss Gorgon.

Having thus described the circumstances of Miss Gorgon's life, let us pass for a moment from that young lady, and lift up the veil of mystery which envelopes the deeds and character of Perkins.

Perkins, too, was an orphan; and he and his Lucy, of summer evenings, when Sol descending lingered fondly yet about the minarets of the Foundling, and gilded the grassplots of Mecklenburgh Square —Perkins, I say, and Lucy would often sit together in the summer-house of that pleasure-ground, and muse upon the strange coin-

:idences of their life. Lucy was motherless and fatherless; so, too, was Perkins. If Perkins was brotherless and sisterless, was not Lucy likewise an only child? Perkins was twenty-three: his age and Lucy's united, amounted to forty-six; and it was to be remarked, as a fact still more extraordinary, that while Lucy's relatives were *aunts*, John's were *uncles*. Mysterious spirit of love! let us treat thee with respect and whisper not too many of thy secrets. The fact is, John and Lucy were a pair of fools (as every young couple *ought* to be who have hearts that are worth a farthing), and were ready to find coincidences, sympathies, hidden gushes of feeling, mystic unions of the soul, and what not, in every single circumstance that occurred from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, and in the intervals. Bedford Row, where Perkins lived, is not very far from Mecklenburgh Square; and John used to say that he felt a comfort that his house and Lucy's were served by the same muffin-man.

Further comment is needless. A more honest, simple, clever, warm-hearted, soft, whimsical, romantical, high-spirited young fellow than John Perkins did not exist. When his father, Dr. Perkins, died, this, his only son, was placed under the care of John Perkins, Esq., of the house of Perkins, Scully and Perkins, those celebrated attorneys in the trading town of Oldborough, which the second partner, William Pitt Scully, Esq., represented in Parliament and in London.

All John's fortune was the house in Bedford Row, which, at his father's death, was let out into chambers, and brought in a clear hundred a year. Under his uncle's roof at Oldborough, where he lived with thirteen red-haired male and female cousins, he was only charged fifty pounds for board, clothes, and pocket-money, and the remainder of his rents was carefully put by for him until his majority. When he approached that period—when he came to belong to two spouting-clubs at Oldborough, among the young merchants and lawyers'-clerks—to blow the flute nicely, and play a good game at billiards—to have written one or two smart things in the *Oldborough Sentinel*—to be fond of smoking (in which act he was discovered by his fainting aunt at three o'clock one morning)—in one word, when John Perkins arrived at manhood, he discovered that he was quite unfit to be an attorney, that he detested all the ways of his uncle's stern, dull, vulgar, regular, red-headed family, and he vowed that he would go to London and make his fortune. Thither he went, his

aunt and cousins, who were all "serious," vowing that he was a lost boy; and when his history opens, John had been two years in the metropolis, inhabiting his own garrets; and a very nice compact set of apartments, looking into the back-garden, at this moment falling vacant, the prudent Lucy Gorgon had visited them, and vowed that she and her John should there commence housekeeping.

All these explanations are tedious, but necessary; and furthermore, it must be said, that as John's uncle's partner was the Liberal Member for Oldborough, so Lucy's uncle was its Ministerial representative.

This gentleman, the brother of the deceased Captain Gorgon, lived at the paternal mansion of Gorgon Castle, and rejoiced in the name and title of Sir George Grimsby Gorgon. He, too, like his younger brother, had married a lady beneath his own rank in life; having espoused the daughter and heiress of Mr. Hicks, the great brewer at Oldborough, who held numerous mortgages on the Gorgon property, all of which he yielded up, together with his daughter Juliana, to the care of the baronet.

What Lady Gorgon was in character, this history will show. In person, if she may be compared to any vulgar animal, one of her father's heavy, healthy, broad-flanked, Roman-nosed white dray-horses might, to the poetic mind, appear to resemble her. At twenty she was a splendid creature, and though not at her full growth, yet remarkable for strength and sinew; at forty-five she was as fine a woman as any in his Majesty's dominions. Five feet seven in height, thirteen stone, her own teeth and hair, she looked as if she were the mother of a regiment of Grenadier Guards. She had three daughters of her own size, and at length, ten years after the birth of the last of the young ladies, a son—one son—George Augustus Frederick Grimsby Gorgon, the godson of a royal duke, whose steady officer in waiting Sir George had been for many years.

It is needless to say, after entering so largely into a description of Lady Gorgon, that her husband was a little shrivelled, wizen-faced creature, eight inches shorter than her ladyship. This is the way of the world, as every single reader of this book must have remarked; for frolic love delights to join giants and pigmies of different sexes in the bonds of matrimony. When you saw her ladyship, in flame-coloured satin and gorgeous toque and feathers,

entering the drawing-room, as footmen along the stairs shouted melodiously, "Sir George and Lady Gorgon," you beheld in her company a small withered old gentleman, with powder and large royal household buttons, who tripped at her elbow as a little weak-legged colt does at the side of a stout mare.

The little General had been present at about a hundred and twenty pitched battles on Hounslow Heath and Wormwood Scrubs, but had never drawn his sword against an enemy. As might be expected, therefore, his talk and *tenue* were outrageously military. He had the whole Army List by heart—that is, as far as the field-officers: all below them he scorned. A bugle at Gorgon Castle always sounded at breakfast and dinner: a gun announced sunset. He clung to his pigtail for many years after the army had forsaken that ornament, and could never be brought to think much of the Peninsular men for giving it up. When he spoke of the Duke, he used to call him "*My Lord Wellington—I recollect him as Captain Wesley.*" He swore fearfully in conversation, was most regular at church, and regularly read to his family and domestics the morning and evening prayer; he bullied his daughters, *seemed* to bully his wife, who led him whither she chose; gave grand entertainments, and never asked a friend by chance; had splendid liveries, and starved his people; and was as dull, stingy, pompous, insolent, cringing, ill-tempered a little creature as ever was known.

With such qualities you may fancy that he was generally admired in society and by his country. So he was: and I never knew a man so endowed whose way through life was not safe—who had fewer pangs of conscience—more positive enjoyments—more respect shown to him—more favours granted to him, than such a one as my friend the General.

Her ladyship was just suited to him, and they did in reality admire each other hugely. Previously to her marriage with the baronet, many love-passages had passed between her and William Pitt Scully, Esq., the attorney; and there was especially one story, *àpropos* of certain syllabubs and Sally-Lunn cakes, which seemed to show that matters had gone very far. Be this as it may, no sooner did the General (Major Gorgon he was then) cast an eye on her, than Scully's five years' fabric of love was instantly dashed to the ground. She cut him pitilessly, cut Sally Scully, his sister, her dearest friend and confidante, and bestowed her big person upon the little aide-de-camp

at the end of a fortnight's wooing. In the course of time, their mutual fathers died; the Gorgon estates were unencumbered: patron of both the seats in the borough of Oldborough, and occupant of one, Sir George Grimsby Gorgon, Baronet, was a personage of no small importance.

He was, it scarcely need be said, a Tory; and this was the reason why William Pitt Scully, Esq., of the firm of Perkins and Scully, deserted those principles in which he had been bred and christened; deserted that church which he had frequented, for he could not bear to see Sir George and my lady flaunting in their grand pew;—deserted, I say, the church, adopted the conventicle, and became one of the most zealous and eloquent supporters that Freedom has known in our time. Scully, of the house of Scully and Perkins, was a dangerous enemy. In five years from that marriage, which snatched from the jilted solicitor his heart's young affections, Sir George Gorgon found that he must actually spend seven hundred pounds to keep his two seats. At the next election, a Liberal was set up against his man, and actually ran him hard; and finally, at the end of eighteen years, the rejected Scully—the mean attorney—was actually the *first* Member for Oldborough, Sir George Grimsby Gorgon, Baronet, being only the second!

The agony of that day cannot be imagined—the dreadful curses of Sir George, who saw fifteen hundred a year robbed from under his very nose—the religious resignation of my lady—the hideous window-smashing that took place at the "Gorgon Arms," and the discomfiture of the pelted Mayor and Corporation. The very next Sunday, Scully was reconciled to the church (or attended it in the morning, and the meeting twice in the afternoon), and as Doctor Snorter uttered the prayer for the High Court of Parliament, his eye—the eye of his whole party—turned towards Lady Gorgon and Sir George in a most unholy triumph. Sir George (who always stood during prayers, like a military man) fairly sank down among the hassocks, and Lady Gorgon was heard to sob as audibly as ever did little beadle-belaboured urchin.

Scully, when at Oldborough, came from that day forth to church. "What," said he, "was it to him? were we not all brethren?" Old Perkins, however, kept religiously to the Squaretoes congregation. In fact, to tell the truth, this subject had been debated between the partners, who saw the advantage of courting both the Establishment and the Dissenters—a manœuvre which, I need not say, is repeated

in almost every country town in England, where a solicitor's house has this kind of power and connection.

Three months after this election came the races at Oldborough, and the race-ball. Gorgon was so infuriated by his defeat, that he gave "the Gorgon cup and cover," a matter of fifteen pounds. Scully, "although anxious," as he wrote from town, "anxious beyond measure to preserve the breed of horses for which our beloved country has ever been famous, could attend no such sports as these, which but too often degenerated into vice." It was voted a shabby excuse. Lady Gorgon was radiant in her barouche and four, and gladly became the patrnoess of the ball that was to ensue; and which all the gentry and townspeople, Tory and Whig, were in the custom of attending. The ball took place on the last da yof the races. On that day, the walls of the market-house, the principal public buildings, and the "Gorgon Arms Hotel" itself, were plastered with the following—

"LETTER FROM OUR DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE, WILLIAM P. SCULLY, ESQ., ETC. ETC.

"*House of Commons, June* 1, 18—.

"MY DEAR HEELTAP,—You know my opinion about horse-racing, and though I blame neither you nor any brother Englishman who enjoys that manly sport, you will, I am sure, appreciate the conscientious motives which induce me not to appear among my friends and constituents on the festival of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th instant. If *I*, however, cannot allow my name to appear among your list of stewards, *one* at least of the representatives of Oldborough has no such scruples. Sir George Gorgon is among you: and though I differ from that honourable Baronet on more than *one vital point*, I am glad to think that he is with you. A gentleman, a soldier, a man of property in the county, how can he be better employed than in forwarding the county's amusements, and in forwarding the happiness of all?

"Had I no such scruples as those to which I have just alluded, I must still have refrained from coming among you. Your great Oldborough common-drainage and inclosure bill comes on to-morrow, and I shall be *at my post*. I am sure, if Sir George Gorgon were here, he and I should on this occasion vote side by side, and that party strife would be forgotten in the object of our common interest—*our dear native town*.

"There is, however, another occasion at hand, in which I shall be

proud to meet him. Your ball is on the night of the 6th. Party forgotten—brotherly union—innocent mirth—beauty, *our dear town's beauty*, our daughters in the joy of their expanding loveliness, our matrons in the exquisite contemplation of their children's bliss,—can you, can I, can Whig or Tory, can any Briton be indifferent to a scene like this, or refuse to join in this heart-stirring festival? If there *be* such let them pardon me,—I, for one, my dear Heeltap, will be among you on Friday night,—ay, and hereby invite all pretty Tory Misses, who are in want of a partner.

"I am here in the very midst of good things, you know, and we old folks like *a supper* after a dance. Please to accept a brace of bucks and a turtle, which come herewith. My worthy colleague, who was so liberal last year of his soup to the poor, will not, I trust, refuse to taste a little of Alderman Birch's—'tis offered on my part with hearty goodwill. Hey for the 6th, and *vive la joie!*

"Ever, my dear Heeltap, your faithful

"W. PITT SCULLY."

"P.S.—Of course this letter is *strictly private*. Say that the venison, &c. came from a *well-wisher to Oldborough*."

This amazing letter was published, in defiance of Mr. Scully's injunctions, by the enthusiastic Heeltap, who said bluntly, in a preface, "that he saw no reason why Mr. Scully should be ashamed of his action, and he, for his part, was glad to let all friends at Oldborough know of it."

The allusion about the Gorgon soup was killing: thirteen paupers in Oldborough had, it was confidently asserted, died of it. Lady Gorgon, on the reading of this letter, was struck completely dumb; Sir George Gorgon was wild. Ten dozen of champagne was he obliged to send down to the "Gorgon Arms," to be added to the festival. He would have stayed away if he could, but he dared not.

At nine o'clock, he in general's uniform, his wife in blue satin and diamonds, his daughters in blue crape and white roses, his niece, Lucy Gorgon, in white muslin, his son, George Augustus Frederick Grimsby Gorgon, in a blue velvet jacket, sugar-loaf buttons, and nankeens, entered the north door of the ball-room, to much cheering, and the sound of "God save the King!"

At that very same moment, and from the south door, issued William Pitt Scully, Esq., M.P., and his staff. Mr. Scully had a brand-new blue coat and brass buttons, buff waistcoat, white kerseymere tights, pumps with large rosettes, and pink silk stockings.

"This wool," said he to a friend, was grown on "Oldborough sheep, this cloth was spun in Oldborough looms, these buttons were cast in an Oldborough manufactory, these shoes were made by an Oldborough tradesman, this *heart* first beat in Oldborough town, and pray heaven may be buried there!"

Could anything resist a man like this? John Perkins, who had come down as one of Scully's aides-de-camp, in a fit of generous enthusiasm, leaped on a whist-table, flung up a pocket-handkerchief, and shrieked—"SCULLY FOR EVER!"

Heeltap, who was generally drunk, fairly burst into tears, and the grave tradesmen and Whig gentry, who had dined with the Member at his inn, and accompanied him thence to the "Gorgon Arms," lifted their deep voices and shouted, "Hear!" "Good!" "Bravo!" "Noble!" "Scully for ever!" "God bless him!" and "Hurrah!"

The scene was tumultuously affecting; and when young Perkins sprang down from the table and came blushing up to the Member, that gentleman said, "Thank you, Jack! *thank* you, my boy! THANK you," in a way which made Perkins think that his supreme cup of bliss was quaffed; that he had but to die: for that life had no other such joy in store for him. Scully was Perkins's Napoleon—he yielded himself up to the attorney, body and soul.

Whilst this scene was going on under one chandelier of the ball-room, beneath the other scarlet little General Gorgon, sumptuous Lady Gorgon, the daughters and niece Gorgons, were standing surrounded by their Tory court, who affected to sneer and titter at the Whig demonstrations which were taking place.

"What a howwid thmell of whithkey!" lisped Cornet Fitch, of the Dragoons, to Miss Lucy, confidentially. "And thethe are what they call Whigth, are they? he! he!"

"They are drunk,——me—drunk by ——!" said the General to the Mayor.

"*Which* is Scully?" said Lady Gorgon, lifting her glass gravely (she was at that very moment thinking of the syllabubs). "Is it that tipsy man in the green coat, or that vulgar creature in the blue one?"

"Law, my lady," said the Mayoress, "have you forgotten him? Why, that's him in blue and buff."

"And a monthous fine man, too," said Cornet Fitch. "I wish we had him in our twoop—he'th thix feet thwee, if he'th an inch; ain't he, Genewal."

No reply.

"And heavens! mamma," shrieked the three Gorgons in a breath, "see, one creature is on the whist-table. Oh, the wretch!"

"I'm sure he's very good-looking," said Lucy, simply.

Lady Gorgon darted at her an angry look, and was about to say something very contemptuous, when, at that instant, John Perkins's shout taking effect, Master George Augustus Frederick Grimsby Gorgon, not knowing better, incontinently raised a small shout on his side.

"Hear! good! bravo!" exclaimed he; "Scully for ever! Hurra-a-a-ay!" and fell skipping about like the Whigs opposite.

"Silence, you brute you!" groaned Lady Gorgon; and seizing him by the shirt-frill and coat-collar, carried him away to his nurse, who, with many other maids of the Whig and Tory parties, stood giggling and peeping at the landing-place.

Fancy how all these small incidents augmented the heap of Lady Gorgon's anger and injuries! She was a dull phlegmatic woman for the most part, and contented herself generally with merely despising her neighbours; but oh! what a fine active hatred raged in her bosom for victorious Scully! At this moment Mr. Perkins had finished shaking hands with his Napoleon—Napoleon seemed bent upon some tremendous enterprise. He was looking at Lady Gorgon very hard.

"She's a fine woman," said Scully, thoughtfully; he was still holding the hand of Perkins. And then, after a pause, "Gad! I think I'll try."

"Try what, sir?"

"She's a *deuced* fine woman!" burst out again the tender solicitor. "I *will* go. Springer, tell the fiddlers to strike up."

Springer scuttled across the room, and gave the leader of the band a knowing nod. Suddenly, "God save the King" ceased, and "Sir Roger de Coverley" began. The rival forces eyed each other: Mr. Scully, accompanied by his friend, came forward, looking very red, and fumbling two large kid gloves.

"*He's going to ask me to dance*," hissed out Lady Gorgon, with a dreadful intuition, and she drew back behind her lord.

D—— it, Madam, *then dance* with him!" said the General. "Don't you see that the scoundrel is carrying it all his own way! ——him! and——him! and——him!" (All of which dashes the reader may fill up with oaths of such strength as may be requisite.)

"General!" cried Lady Gorgon, but could say no more. Scully was before her.

"Madam!" exclaimed the Liberal Member for Oldborough, "in a moment like this—I say—that is—that on the present occasion—your ladyship—unaccustomed as I am—pooh, psha—*will* your ladyship give me the distinguished honour and pleasure of going down the country-dance with your ladyship?"

An immense heave of her ladyship's ample chest was perceptible. Yards of blond lace, which might be compared to a foam of the sea, were agitated at the same moment, and by the same mighty emotion. The river of diamonds which flowed round her ladyship's neck, seemed to swell and to shine more than ever. The tall plumes on her ambrosial head bowed down beneath the storm. In other words, Lady Gorgon, in a furious rage, which she was compelled to restrain, trembled, drew up, and bowing majestically said,—

"Sir, I shall have much pleasure." With this, she extended her hand. Scully, trembling, thrust forward one of his huge kid gloves, and led her to the head of the country-dance. John Perkins—who I presume had been drinking pretty freely, so as to have forgotten his ordinary bashfulness—looked at the three Gorgons in blue, then at the pretty smiling one in white, and stepping up to her, without the smallest hesitation, asked her if she would dance with him. The young lady smilingly agreed. The great example of Scully and Lady Gorgon was followed by all dancing men and women. Political enmities were forgotten. Whig voters invited Tory voters' wives to the dance. The daughters of Reform accepted the hands of the sons of Conservatism. The reconciliation of the Romans and Sabines was not more touching than this sweet fusion. Whack—whack! Mr. Springer clapped his hands; and the fiddlers adroitly obeying the cheerful signal, began playing "Sir Roger de Coverley" louder than ever.

I do not know by what extraordinary charm (*nescio quâ præter*

*solitum, &c.*), but young Perkins, who all his life had hated country-dances, was delighted with this one, and skipped and laughed, poussetting, crossing, down-the-middling, with his merry little partner, till every one of the bettermost sort of the thirty-nine couples had dropped panting away, and till the youngest Miss Gorgon, coming up to his partner, said, in a loud, hissing, scornful whisper, "Lucy, mamma thinks you have danced quite enough with this—this person." And Lucy, blushing, starting back, and looking at Perkins in a very melancholy way, made him a little curtsey, and went off to the Gorgonian party with her cousin. Perkins was too frightened to lead her back to her place—too frightened at first, and then too angry. "Person!" said he: his soul swelled with a desperate republicanism: he went back to his patron more of a radical than ever.

He found that gentleman in the solitary tea-room, pacing up and down before the observant landlady and handmaidens of the "Gorgon Arms," wiping his brows, gnawing his fingers—his ears looming over his stiff white shirt-collar as red as fire. Once more the great man seized John Perkins's hand as the latter came up.

"D—— the aristocrats!" roared the ex-follower of Squaretoes.

"And so say I; but what's the matter, sir?"

"What's the matter?—Why, that woman—that infernal haughty, strait-laced, cold-blooded brewer's daughter! I loved that woman, sir—I *kissed* that woman, sir, twenty years ago: we were all but engaged, sir: we've walked for hours and hours, sir—us and the governess—I've got a lock of her hair, sir, among my papers now; and to-night, would you believe it?—as soon as she got to the bottom of the set, away she went—not one word would she speak to me all the way down: and when I wanted to lead her to her place, and asked her if she would have a glass of negus, 'Sir,' says she, 'I have done my duty; I bear no malice: but I consider you a traitor to Sir George Gorgon's family—a traitor and an upstart! I consider your speaking to me as a piece of insolent vulgarity, and beg you will leave me to myself!' There's her speech, sir. Twenty people heard it, and all of her Tory set too. I'll tell you what, Jack: at the next election I'll put *you* up. Oh that woman! that woman!—and to think that I love her still!" Here Mr. Scully paused, and fiercely consoled himself by swallowing three cups of Mrs. Rincer's green tea.

The fact is, that Lady Gorgon's passion had completely got the

better of her reason. Her ladyship was naturally cold and artificially extremely squeamish ; and when this great red-faced enemy of hers looked tenderly at her through his red little eyes, and squeezed her hand and attempted to renew old acquaintance, she felt such an intolerable disgust at his triumph, at his familiarity, and at the remembrance of her own former liking for him, that she gave utterance to the speech above correctly reported. The Tories were delighted with her spirit, and Cornet Fitch, with much glee, told the story to the General; but that officer, who was at whist with some of his friends, flung down his cards, and coming up to his lady, said briefly,

"Madam, you are a fool!"

"I will *not* stay here to be bearded by that disgusting man!—Mr. Fitch, call my people.—Henrietta, bring Miss Lucy from that linendraper with whom she is dancing. I will not stay, General, once for all."

Henrietta ran—she hated her cousin ; Cornet Fitch was departing. "Stop, Fitch," said Sir George, seizing him by the arm. "You are a fool, Lady Gorgon," said he, "and I repeat it—a —— fool! This fellow Scully is carrying all before him: he has talked with everybody, laughed with everybody—and you, with your infernal airs—a brewer's daughter, by ——, must sit like a queen and not speak to a soul! You've lost me one seat of my borough, with your infernal pride—fifteen hundred a year, by Jove!—and you think you will bully me out of another. No, Madam, you *shall* stay, and stay supper too; —and the girls shall dance with every cursed chimney-sweep and butcher in the room: they shall—confound me!"

Her ladyship saw that it was necessary to submit; and Mr. Springer, the master of the ceremonies, was called, and requested to point out some eligible partners for the young ladies. One went off with a Whig auctioneer ; another figured in a quadrille with a very Liberal apothecary, and the third, Miss Henrietta, remained.

"Hallo you, sir!" roared the little General to John Perkins, who was passing by. John turned round and faced him.

"You were dancing with my niece just now—show us your skill now, and dance with one of my daughters. Stand up, Miss Henrietta Gorgon—Mr. What's-your-name?"

"My name," said John, with marked and majestic emphasis, "is PERKINS." And he looked towards Lucy, who dared not look again.

"Miss Gorgon—Mr. Perkins. There now go and dance."

"Mr. Perkins regrets, Madam," said John, making a bow to Miss Henrietta, "that he is not able to dance this evening. I am this moment obliged to look to the supper; but you will find, no doubt, some other PERSON who will have much pleasure."

"Go to ——, sir!" screamed the General, starting up, and shaking his cane.

"Calm yourself, dearest George," said Lady Gorgon, clinging fondly to him. Fitch twiddled his moustaches. Miss Henrietta Gorgon stared with open mouth. The silks of the surrounding dowagers rustled—the countenances of all looked grave.

"I will follow you, sir, wherever you please; and you may hear of me whenever you like," said Mr. Perkins, bowing and retiring. He heard little Lucy sobbing in a corner. He was lost at once—lost in love; he felt as if he could combat fifty generals! he never was so happy in his life!

The supper came; but as that meal cost five shillings a head, General Gorgon dismissed the four spinsters of his family homewards in the carriage, and so saved himself a pound. This added to Jack Perkins's wrath; he had hoped to have seen Miss Lucy once more. He was a steward, and, in the General's teeth, would have done his duty. He was thinking how he would have helped her to the most delicate chicken-wings and blancmanges, how he *would* have made her take champagne. Under the noses of indignant aunt and uncle, what glorious fun it would have been!

Out of place as Mr. Scully's present was, and though Lady Gorgon and her party sneered at the vulgar notion of venison and turtle for supper, all the world at Oldborough ate very greedily of those two substantial dishes; and the Mayor's wife became from that day forth a mortal enemy of the Gorgons: for, sitting near her ladyship, who refused the proffered soup and meat, the Mayoress thought herself obliged to follow this disagreeable example. She sent away the plate of turtle with a sigh, saying, however, to the baronet's lady, "I thought, Mem, that the *Lord Mayor of London* always had turtle to his supper?"

"And what if he didn't, Biddy?" said his Honour the Mayor; "a good thing's a good thing, and here goes!" wherewith he plunged his spoon into the savoury mess. The Mayoress, as we have said, dared not; but she hated Lady Gorgon, and remembered it at the next election.

The pride, in fact, and insolence of the Gorgon party rendered very person in the room hostile to them; so soon as, gorged with ieat, they began to find that courage which Britons invariably derive om their victuals. The show of the Gorgon plate seemed to offend ie people. The Gorgon champagne was a long time, too, in making s appearance. Arrive, however, it did. The people were waiting for ; the young ladies, not accustomed to that drink, declined pledging ieir admirers until it was produced; the men, too, despised the ucellas and sherry, and were looking continually towards the door. t last, Mr. Rincer, the landlord, Mr. Hock, Sir George's butler, and undry others entered the room. Bang! went the corks—fizz the oamy liquor sparkled into all sorts of glasses that were held out for s reception. Mr. Hock helped Sir George and his party, who lrank with great gusto; the wine which was administered to the ersons immediately around Mr. Scully was likewise pronounced o be good. But Mr. Perkins, who had taken his seat among the umbler individuals, and in the very middle of the table, observed hat all these persons, after drinking, made to each other very wry nd ominous faces, and whispered much. He tasted his wine: it as a villanous compound of sugar, vitriol, soda-water, and green ooseberries. At this moment a great clatter of forks was made y the president's and vice-president's party. Silence for a toast—was silence all.

"Landlord," said Mr. Perkins, starting up (the rogue, where id his impudence come from?) "have you any champagne of *our own?*"

"Silence! down!" roared the Tories, the ladies looking aghast. Silence, sit down you!" shrieked the well-known voice of ie General.

"I beg your pardon, General," said young John Perkins; "but here *could* you have bought this champagne? My worthy friend know is going to propose the ladies; let us at any rate drink uch a toast in good wine." ("Hear, hear!") "Drink her ladyhip's health in *this* stuff? I declare to goodness I would sooner rink it in beer!"

No pen can describe the uproar which arose: the anguish of ie Gorgonites—the shrieks, jeers, cheers, ironic cries of "Swipes!" c., which proceeded from the less genteel but more enthusiastic cullyites.

"This vulgarity is too much," said Lady Gorgon, rising; and Mrs. Mayoress and the ladies of the party did so too.

The General, two squires, the clergyman, the Gorgon apothecary and attorney, with their respective ladies, followed her: they were plainly beaten from the field. Such of the Tories as dared remained, and in inglorious compromise shared the jovial Whig feast.

"Gentlemen and ladies," hiccupped Mr. Heeltap, "I'll give you a toast. 'Champagne to our real—hic—friends,' no, 'Real champagne to our friends,' and—hic—pooh! 'Champagne to our friends, and real pain to our enemies,'—huzzay!"

The Scully faction on this day bore the victory away, and if the polite reader has been shocked by certain vulgarities on the part of Mr. Scully and his friends, he must remember *imprimis* that Oldborough was an inconsiderable place—that the inhabitants thereof were chiefly tradespeople, not of refined habits—that Mr. Scully himself had only for three months mingled among the aristocracy—that his young friend Perkins was violently angry—and finally, and to conclude, that the proud vulgarity of the great Sir George Gorgon and his family was infinitely more odious and contemptible than the mean vulgarity of the Scullyites and their leader.

Immediately after this event, Mr. Scully and his young friend Perkins returned to town; the latter to his garrets in Bedford Row—the former to his apartments on the first-floor of the same house. He lived here to superintend his legal business: his London agents, Messrs. Higgs, Biggs & Blatherwick, occupying the ground-floor; the junior partner, Mr. Gustavus Blatherwick, the second flat of the house. Scully made no secret of his profession or residence: he was an attorney, and proud of it; he was the grandson of a labourer, and thanked God for it; he had made his fortune by his own honest labour, and why should he be ashamed of it?

And now, having explained at full length who the several heroes and heroines of this history were, and how they conducted themselves in the country, let us describe their behaviour in London, and the great events which occurred there.

You must know that Mr. Perkins bore away the tenderest recollections of the young lady with whom he had danced at the Oldborough ball, and, having taken particular care to find out where she dwelt when in the metropolis, managed soon to become acquainted with aunt Biggs, and made himself so amiable to that lady, that she

begged he would pass all his disengaged evenings at her lodgings in Caroline Place. Mrs. Biggs was perfectly aware that the young gentleman did not come for her bohea and muffins, so much as for the sweeter conversation of her niece, Miss Gorgon; but seeing that these two young people were of an age when ideas of love and marriage will spring up, do what you will; seeing that her niece had a fortune, and Mr. Perkins had the prospect of a place, and was moreover a very amiable and well-disposed young fellow, she thought her niece could not do better than marry him; and Miss Gorgon thought so too. Now the public will be able to understand the meaning of that important conversation which is recorded at the very commencement of this history.

Lady Gorgon and her family were likewise in town; but, when in the metropolis, they never took notice of their relative, Miss Lucy: the idea of acknowledging an ex-schoolmistress living in Mecklenburgh Square being much too preposterous for a person of my Lady Gorgon's breeding and fashion. She did not, therefore, know of the progress which sly Perkins was making all this while; for Lucy Gorgon did not think it was at all necessary to inform her ladyship how deeply she was smitten by the wicked young gentleman who had made all the disturbance at the Oldborough ball.

The intimacy of these young persons had, in fact, become so close, that on a certain sunshiny Sunday in December, after having accompanied aunt Biggs to church, they had pursued their walk as far as that rendezvous of lovers, the Regent's Park, and were talking of their coming marriage with much confidential tenderness, before the bears in the Zoological Gardens.

Miss Lucy was ever and anon feeding those interesting animals with buns, to perform which act of charity she had clambered up on the parapet which surrounds their den. Mr. Perkins was below; and Miss Lucy, having distributed her buns, was on the point of following, —but whether from timidity, or whether from a desire to do young Perkins an essential service, I know not: however, she found herself quite unwilling to jump down unaided.

"My dearest John," said she, "I never can jump that."

Whereupon, John stepped up, put one hand round Lucy's waist; and as one of hers gently fell upon his shoulder, Mr. Perkins took the other and said,—

"Now jump."

Hoop! jump she did, and so excessively active and clever was Mr. John Perkins, that he jumped Miss Lucy plump into the middle of a group formed of

Lady Gorgon,

The Misses Gorgon,

Master George Augustus Frederick Grimsby Gorgon,

And a footman, poodle, and French governess: who had all been for two or three minutes listening to the billings and cooings of these imprudent young lovers.

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## CHAPTER II.

### SHOWS HOW THE PLOT BEGAN TO THICKEN IN OR ABOUT BEDFORD ROW.

"MISS LUCY!"

"Upon my word!"

"I'm hanged if it arn't Lucy! How do, Lucy?" uttered Lady, the Misses, and Master Gorgon in a breath.

Lucy came forward, bending down her ambrosial curls, and blushing, as a modest young woman should: for, in truth, the scrape was very awkward. And as for John Perkins, he made a start, and then a step forwards, and then two backwards, and then began laying hands upon his black satin stock—in short, the sun did not shine at that moment upon a man who looked so exquisitely foolish.

"Miss Lucy Gorgon, is your aunt—is Mrs. Briggs here?" said Lady Gorgon, drawing herself up with much state.

"Mrs. Biggs, aunt," said Lucy demurely.

"Biggs or Briggs, madam, it is not of the slightest consequence. I presume that persons in my rank of life are not expected to know everybody's name in Magdeburg Square?" (Lady Gorgon had a house in Baker Street, and a dismal house it was.) "*Not* here," continued she, rightly interpreting Lucy's silence, "NOT here?—and may I ask how long is it that young ladies have been allowed to walk abroad without chaperons, and to—to take a part in such scenes as that which we have just seen acted?"

To this question—and indeed it was rather difficult to answer—Miss Gorgon had no reply. There were the six grey eyes of her cousins glowering at her; there was George Augustus Frederick examining her with an air of extreme wonder, Mademoiselle the governess turning her looks demurely away, and awful Lady Gorgon glancing fiercely at her in front. Not mentioning the footman and poodle, what could a poor modest, timid girl plead before such an inquisition, especially when she was clearly guilty? Add to this, that as Lady Gorgon, that majestic woman, always remarkable for her size and insolence of demeanour, had planted herself in the middle of the path, and spoke at the extreme pitch of her voice, many persons walking in the neighbourhood had heard her ladyship's speech and stopped, and seemed disposed to await the rejoinder.

"For heaven's sake, aunt, don't draw a crowd around us," said Lucy, who, indeed, was glad of the only escape that lay in her power. "I will tell you of the—of the circumstances of—of my engagement with this gentleman—with Mr. Perkins," added she, in a softer tone —so soft that the *'erkins* was quite inaudible.

"A Mr. What? An engagement without consulting your guardians!" screamed her ladyship. "This must be looked to! Jerningham, call round my carriage. Mademoiselle, you will have the goodness to walk home with Master Gorgon, and carry him, if you please, where there is wet; and, girls, as the day is fine, you will do likewise. Jerningham, you will attend the young ladies. Miss Gorgon, I will thank you to follow me immediately." And so saying, and looking at the crowd with ineffable scorn, and at Mr. Perkins not at all, the lady bustled away forwards, the files of Gorgon daughters and governess closing round and enveloping poor Lucy, who found herself carried forward against her will, and in a minute seated in her aunt's coach, along with that tremendous person.

Her case was bad enough, but what was it to Perkins's? Fancy his blank surprise and rage at having his love thus suddenly ravished from him, and his delicious *tête-à-tête* interrupted. He managed, in an inconceivably short space of time, to conjure up half a million obstacles to his union. What should he do? he would rush on to Baker Street, and wait there until his Lucy left Lady Gorgon's house.

He could find no vehicle for him in the Regent's Park, and was in consequence obliged to make his journey on foot. Of course, he

nearly killed himself with running, and ran so quick, that he was just in time to see the two ladies step out of Lady Gorgon's carriage at her own house, and to hear Jerningham's fellow-footman roar to the Gorgonian coachman, "Half-past seven!" at which hour we are, to this day, convinced that Lady Gorgon was going out to dine. Mr. Jerningham's associate having banged to the door, with an insolent look towards Perkins, who was prying in with the most suspicious and indecent curiosity, retired, exclaiming, "That chap has a hi to our great-coats, I reckon!" and left John Perkins to pace the street and be miserable.

John Perkins then walked resolutely up and down dismal Baker Street, determined on an *éclaircissement*. He was for some time occupied in thinking how it was that the Gorgons were not at church, they who made such a parade of piety; and John Perkins smiled as he passed the chapel, and saw that two *charity sermons* were to be preached that day—and therefore it was that General Gorgon read prayers to his family at home in the morning.

Perkins, at last, saw that little General, in blue frock-coat and spotless buff gloves, saunter scowling home; and half-an-hour before his arrival, had witnessed the entrance of Jerningham, and the three gaunt Miss Gorgons, poodle, son-and-heir, and French governess, protected by him, into Sir George's mansion.

"Can she be going to stay all night?" mused poor John, after being on the watch for three hours: "that footman is the only person who has left the house:" when presently, to his inexpressible delight, he saw a very dirty hackney-coach clatter up to the Gorgon door, out of which first issued the ruby plush breeches and stalwart calves of Mr. Jerningham; these were followed by his body, and then the gentleman, ringing modestly, was admitted.

Again the door opened: a lady came out, nor was she followed by the footman, who crossed his legs at the door-post and allowed her to mount the jingling vehicle as best she might. Mr. Jerningham had witnessed the scene in the Park Gardens, had listened to the altercation through the library keyhole, and had been mighty sulky at being ordered to call a coach for this young woman. He did not therefore deign to assist her to mount.

But there was *one* who did! Perkins was by the side of his Lucy: he had seen her start back and cry, "La, John!"—had felt her squeeze his arm—had mounted with her into the coach, and then

shouted with a voice of thunder to the coachman, "Caroline Place, Mecklenburgh Square."

But Mr. Jerningham would have been much more surprised and puzzled if he had waited one minute longer, and seen this Mr. Perkins, who had so gallantly escaladed the hackney-coach, step out of it with the most mortified, miserable, chap-fallen countenance possible.

The fact is, he had found poor Lucy sobbing fit to break her heart, and instead of consoling her, as he expected, he only seemed to irritate her further: for she said, "Mr. Perkins—I beg—I insist, that you leave the carriage." And when Perkins made some movement (which, not being in the vehicle at the time, we have never been able to comprehend), she suddenly sprang from the back-seat and began pulling at a large piece of cord which communicated with the wrist of the gentleman driving; and, screaming to him at the top of her voice, bade him immediately stop.

This Mr. Coachman did, with a curious, puzzled, grinning air.

Perkins descended, and on being asked, "Vere ham I to drive the young 'oman, sir?" I am sorry to say muttered something like an oath, and uttered the above-mentioned words, "Caroline Place, Mecklenburgh Square," in a tone which I should be inclined to describe as both dogged and sheepish,—very different from that cheery voice which he had used when he first gave the order.

Poor Lucy, in the course of those fatal three hours which had passed while Mr. Perkins was pacing up and down Baker Street, had received a lecture which lasted exactly one hundred and eighty minutes—from her aunt first, then from her uncle, whom we have seen marching homewards, and often from both together.

Sir George Gorgon and his lady poured out such a flood of advice and abuse against the poor girl, that she came away from the interview quite timid and cowering; and when she saw John Perkins (the sly rogue! how well he thought he had managed the trick!) she shrunk from him as if he had been a demon of wickedness, ordered him out of the carriage, and went home by herself, convinced that she had committed some tremendous sin.

While, then, her coach jingled away to Caroline Place, Perkins, once more alone, bent his steps in the same direction. A desperate, heart-stricken man, he passed by the beloved's door, saw lights in the front drawing-room, felt probably that she was there; but he could

not go in. Moodily he paced down Doughty Street, and turning abruptly into Bedford Row, rushed into his own chambers, where Mrs. Snooks, the laundress, had prepared his humble Sabbath meal.

A cheerful fire blazed in his garret, and Mrs Snooks had prepared for him the favourite blade-bone he loved (blest four-days' dinner for a bachelor—roast, cold, hashed, grilled blade-bone, the fourth being better than the first); but although he usually did rejoice in this meal —ordinarily, indeed, grumbling that there was not enough to satisfy him—he, on this occasion, after two mouthfuls, flung down his knife and fork, and buried his two claws in his hair.

"Snooks," said he at last, very moodily, "remove this d—— mutton, give me my writing things, and some hot brandy-and-water."

This was done without much alarm: for you must know that Perkins used to dabble in poetry, and ordinarily prepared himself for composition by this kind of stimulus.

He wrote hastily a few lines.

"Snooks, put on your bonnet," said he, "and carry this—*you know where!*" he added, in a hollow, heart-breaking tone of voice, that affected poor Snooks almost to tears. She went, however, with the note, which was to this purpose:—

"Lucy! Lucy! my soul's love—what, what has happened? I am writing this"—(*a gulp of brandy-and-water*)—"in a state bordering on distraction—madness—insanity" (*another*). "Why did you send me out of the coach in that cruel, cruel way? Write to me a word, a line—tell me, tell me, I may come to you—and leave me not in this agonizing condition; your faithful" (*glog—glog—glog—the whole glass*)—— "J. P."

He never signed John Perkins in full—he couldn't, it was so unromantic.

Well, this missive was despatched by Mrs. Snooks, and Perkins, in a fearful state of excitement, haggard, wild, and with more brandy-and-water, awaited the return of his messenger.

When at length, after about an absence of forty years, as it seemed to him, the old lady returned with a large packet, Perkins seized it with a trembling hand, and was yet more frightened to see the hand-writing of Mrs. or Miss Biggs.

"MY DEAR MR. PERKINS," she began—"Although I am not your soul's adored, I performed her part for once, since I have read your letter, as I told her. You need not be very much alarmed, although Lucy is at this moment in bed and unwell: for the poor girl has had a sad scene at her grand uncle's house in Baker Street, and came home very much affected. Rest, however, will restore her, for she is not one of your nervous sort; and I hope when you come in the morning, you will see her as blooming as she was when you went out to-day on that unlucky walk.

"See what Sir George Gorgon says of us all! You won't challenge him, I know, as he is to be your uncle, and so I may show you his letter.

"Good-night, my dear John. Do not go *quite* distracted before morning; and believe me your loving aunt,

"JEMIMA BIGGS."

"*Baker Street, 11th December.*

"Major-General Sir George Gorgon has heard with the utmost disgust and surprise of the engagement which Miss Lucy Gorgon has thought fit to form.

"The Major-General cannot conceal his indignation at the share which Miss Biggs has taken in this disgraceful transaction.

"Sir George Gorgon puts an absolute veto upon all further communication between his niece and the low-born adventurer who has been admitted into her society, and begs to say that Lieutenant Fitch, of the Lifeguards, is the gentleman who he intends shall marry Miss Gorgon.

"It is the Major-General's wish, that on the 28th Miss Gorgon should be ready to come to his house, in Baker Street, where she will be more safe from impertinent intrusions than she has been in Mucklebury Square.

"Mrs. Biggs,
"Caroline Place,
"Mecklenburgh Square."

When poor John Perkins read this epistle, blank rage and wonder filled his soul, at the audacity of the little General, who thus, without the smallest title in the world, pretended to dispose of the hand and fortune of his niece. The fact is, that Sir George had such a

transcendent notion of his own dignity and station, that it never for a moment entered his head that his niece, or anybody else connected with him, should take a single step in life without previously receiving his orders; and Mr. Fitch, a baronet's son, having expressed an admiration of Lucy, Sir George had determined that his suit should be accepted, and really considered Lucy's preference of another as downright treason.

John Perkins determined on the death of Fitch as the very least reparation that should satisfy him; and vowed too that some of the General's blood should be shed for the words which he had dared to utter.

We have said that William Pitt Scully, Esq., M.P., occupied the first-floor of Mr. Perkins's house, in Bedford Row; and the reader is further to be informed that an immense friendship had sprung up between these two gentlemen. The fact is, that poor John was very much flattered by Scully's notice, and began in a very short time to fancy himself a political personage; for he had made several of Scully's speeches, written more than one letter from him to his constituents, and, in a word, acted as his gratis clerk. At least a guinea a week did Mr. Perkins save to the pockets of Mr. Scully, and with hearty good will too, for he adored the great William Pitt, and believed every word that dropped from the pompous lips of that gentleman.

Well, after having discussed Sir George Gorgon's letter, poor Perkins, in the utmost fury of mind that his darling should be slandered so, feeling a desire for fresh air, determined to descend to the garden and smoke a cigar in that rural, quiet spot. The night was very calm. The moonbeams slept softly upon the herbage of Gray's Inn gardens, and bathed with silver splendour Theobald's Row. A million of little frisky twinkling stars attended their queen, who looked with bland round face upon their gambols, as they peeped in and out from the azure heavens. Along Gray's Inn wall a lazy row of cabs stood listlessly, for who would call a cab on such a night? Meanwhile their drivers, at the alehouse near, smoked the short pipe or quaffed the foaming beer. Perhaps from Gray's Inn Lane some broken sounds of Irish revelry might rise. Issuing perhaps from Raymond Buildings gate, six lawyers' clerks might whoop a tipsy song—or the loud watchman yell the passing hour; but beyond this all was silence; and young Perkins, as he sat in the summer-house at the bottom of the garden, and contemplated the peaceful heaven, felt some influences of it

entering into his soul, and almost forgetting revenge, thought but of peace and love.

Presently, he was aware there was some one else pacing the garden. Who could it be?—Not Blatherwick, for he passed the Sabbath with his grandmamma at Clapham; not Scully surely, for he always went to Bethesda Chapel, and to a select prayer-meeting afterwards. Alas! it *was* Scully: for though that gentleman *said* that he went to chapel, we have it for a fact that he did not always keep his promise, and was at this moment employed in rehearsing an extempore speech, which he proposed to deliver at St. Stephen's.

"Had I, sir," spouted he, with folded arms, slowly pacing to and fro —"Had I, sir, entertained the smallest possible intention of addressing the House on the present occasion—hum, on the present occasion—I would have endeavoured to prepare myself in a way that should have at least shown my sense of the greatness of the subject before the House's consideration, and the nature of the distinguished audience I have the honour to address. I am, sir, a plain man—born of the people—myself one of the people, having won, thank heaven, an honourable fortune and position by my own honest labour; and standing here as I do—

* * * * *"

Here Mr. Scully (it may be said that he never made a speech without bragging about himself: and an excellent plan it is, for people cannot help believing you at last)—here, I say, Mr. Scully, who had one arm raised, felt himself suddenly tipped on the shoulder, and heard a voice saying, "Your money or your life!"

The honourable gentleman twirled round as if he had been shot; the papers on which a great part of this impromptu was written dropped from his lifted hand, and some of them were actually borne on the air into neighbouring gardens. The man was, in fact, in the direst fright.

"It's only I," said Perkins, with rather a forced laugh, when he saw the effect that his wit had produced.

"Only you! And pray what the dev——what right have you to —to come upon a man of my rank in that way, and disturb me in the midst of very important meditations?" asked Mr. Scully, beginning to grow fierce.

"I want your advice," said Perkins, "on a matter of the very greatest importance to me. You know my idea of marrying?"

"Marry!" said Scully; "I thought you had given up that silly scheme. And how, pray, do you intend to live?"

"Why, my intended has a couple of hundreds a year, and my clerkship in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office will be as much more."

"Clerkship—Tape and Sealing-Wax Office—Government sinecure! —Why, good heavens! John Perkins, you don't tell *me* that you are going to accept any such thing?"

"It *is* a very small salary, certainly," said John, who had a decent notion of his own merits; "but consider, six months' vacation, two hours in the day, and those spent over the newspapers. After all, it's——"

"After all it's a swindle," roared out Mr. Scully—"a swindle upon the country; an infamous tax upon the people, who starve that you may fatten in idleness. But take this clerkship in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office," continued the patriot, his bosom heaving with noble indignation, and his eye flashing the purest fire,—"*Take* this clerkship, John Perkins, and sanction tyranny, by becoming one of its agents; sanction dishonesty by sharing in its plunder—do this, BUT never more be friend of mine. Had I a child," said the patriot, clasping his hands and raising his eyes to heaven, "I would rather see him dead, sir—dead, dead at my feet, than the servant of a Government which all honest men despise." And here, giving a searching glance at Perkins, Mr. Scully began tramping up and down the garden in a perfect fury.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the timid John Perkins—"don't say *so*. My dear Mr. Scully, I'm not the dishonest character you suppose me to be—I never looked at the matter in this light. I'll—I'll consider of it. I'll tell Crampton that I will give up the place; but for heaven's sake, don't let me forfeit *your* friendship, which is dearer to me than any place in the world."

Mr. Scully pressed his hand, and said nothing; and though their interview lasted a full half hour longer, during which they paced up and down the gravel walk, we shall not breathe a single syllable of their conversation, as it has nothing to do with our tale.

The next morning, after an interview with Miss Lucy, John Perkins, Esq., was seen to issue from Mrs. Biggs' house, looking particularly pale, melancholy, and thoughtful; and he did not stop until he reached a certain door in Downing Street, where was the

office of a certain great Minister, and the offices of the clerks in his lordship's department.

The head of them was Mr. Josiah Crampton, who has now to be introduced to the public. He was a little old gentleman, some sixty years of age, maternal uncle to John Perkins; a bachelor, who had been about forty-two years employed in the department of which he was now the head.

After waiting four hours in an ante-room, where a number of Irishmen, some newspaper editors, many pompous-looking political personages asking for the "first lord," a few sauntering clerks, and numbers of swift active messengers passed to and fro;—after waiting for four hours, making drawings on the blotting-book, and reading the *Morning Post* for that day week, Mr. Perkins was informed that he might go into his uncle's room, and did so accordingly.

He found a little hard old gentleman seated at a table covered with every variety of sealing-wax, blotting-paper, envelopes, despatch-boxes, green tapers, &c. &c. An immense fire was blazing in the grate, an immense sheet-almanack hung over that, a screen, three or four chairs, and a faded Turkey carpet, formed the rest of the furniture of this remarkable room—which I have described thus particularly, because, in the course of a long official life, I have remarked that such is the invariable decoration of political rooms.

"Well, John," said the little hard old gentleman, pointing to an arm-chair, "I'm told you've been here since eleven. Why the deuce do you come so early?"

"I had important business," answered Mr. Perkins, stoutly; and as his uncle looked up with a comical expression of wonder, John began in a solemn tone to deliver a little speech which he had composed, and which proved him to be a very worthy, easy, silly fellow.

"Sir," said Mr. Perkins, "you have known for some time past the nature of my political opinions, and the intimacy which I have had the honour to form with one—with some of the leading members of the Liberal party." (A grin from Mr. Crampton.) "When first, by your kindness, I was promised the clerkship in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office, my opinions were not formed as they are now; and having taken the advice of the gentlemen with whom I act,"—(an enormous grin,)—"the advice, I say, of the gentlemen with whom I

act, and the counsel likewise of my own conscience, I am compelled, with the deepest grief, to say, my dear uncle, that I—I——"

"That you—what, sir?" exclaimed little Mr. Crampton, bouncing off his chair. "You don't mean to say that you are such a fool as to decline the place?"

"I do decline the place," said Perkins, whose blood rose at the word 'fool.' "As a man of honour, I cannot take it."

"Not take it! and how are you to live? On the rent of that house of yours? For, by gad, sir, if you give up the clerkship, I never will give you a shilling."

"It cannot be helped," said Mr. Perkins, looking as much like a martyr as he possibly could, and thinking himself a very fine fellow. "I have talents, sir, which I hope to cultivate; and am member of a profession by which a man may hope to rise to the very highest offices of the State."

"Profession, talents, offices of the State! Are you mad, John Perkins, that you come to me with such insufferable twaddle as this? Why, do you think if you *had* been capable of rising at the bar, I would have taken so much trouble about getting you a place? No, sir; you are too fond of pleasure, and bed, and tea-parties, and small-talk, and reading novels, and playing the flute, and writing sonnets. You would no more rise at the bar than my messenger, sir. It was because I knew your disposition—that hopeless, careless, irresolute good-humour of yours—that I had determined to keep you out of danger, by placing you in a snug shelter, where the storms of the world would not come near you. You must have principles forsooth! and you must marry Miss Gorgon, of course; and by the time you have gone ten circuits, and had six children, you will have eaten up every shilling of your wife's fortune, and be as briefless as you are now. Who the deuce has put all this nonsense into your head? I think I know."

Mr. Perkins's ears tingled as these hard words saluted them; and he scarcely knew whether he ought to knock his uncle down, or fall at his feet and say, "Uncle, I have been a fool, and I know it." The fact is, that in his interview with Miss Gorgon and her aunt in the morning, when he came to tell them of the resolution he had formed to give up the place, both the ladies and John himself had agreed, with a thousand rapturous tears and exclamations, that he was one of the noblest young men that ever lived, had acted as

became himself, and might with perfect propriety give up the place, his talents being so prodigious that no power on earth could hinder him from being Lord Chancellor. Indeed, John and Lucy had always thought the clerkship quite beneath him, and were not a little glad, perhaps, at finding a pretext for decently refusing it. But as Perkins was a young gentleman whose candour was such that he was always swayed by the opinions of the last speaker, he did begin to feel now the truth of his uncle's statements, however disagreeable they might be.

Mr. Crampton continued :—

"I think I know the cause of your patriotism. Has not William Pitt Scully, Esq., had something to do with it?"

Mr. Perkins *could* not turn any redder than he was, but confessed with deep humiliation that "he *had* consulted Mr. Scully among other friends."

Mr. Crampton smiled—drew a letter from a heap before him, and tearing off the signature, handed over the document to his nephew. It contained the following paragraphs :—

"Hawksby has sounded Scully: we can have him any day we want him. He talks very big at present, and says he would not take anything under a . . . This is absurd. He has a Yorkshire nephew coming up to town, and wants a place for him. There is one vacant in the Tape Office, he says: have you not a promise of it?"

"I can't—I can't believe it," said John; "this, sir, is some weak invention of the enemy. Scully is the most honourable man breathing."

"Mr. Scully is a gentleman in a very fair way to make a fortune," answered Mr. Crampton. "Look you, John—it is just as well for your sake that I should give you the news a few weeks before the papers, for I don't want you to be ruined, if I can help it, as I don't wish to have you on my hands. We know all the particulars of Scully's history. He was a Tory attorney at Oldborough; he was jilted by the present Lady Gorgon, turned Radical, and fought Sir George in his own borough. Sir George would have had the peerage he is dying for, had he not lost that second seat (by-the-by, my lady will be here in five minutes), and Scully is now quite firm there. Well, my dear lad, we have bought your incorruptible Scully. Look here,"—and Mr. Crampton produced three *Morning Posts*.

"'THE HONOURABLE HENRY HAWKSBY'S DINNER-PARTY.—Lord So-and-So—Duke of So-and-So—W. Pitt Scully, Esq., M.P.'

"Hawksby is our neutral, our dinner-giver.

"'LADY DIANA DOLDRUM'S ROUT.—W. Pitt Scully, Esq.,' again.

"'THE EARL OF MANTRAP'S GRAND DINNER.'—A Duke—four Lords—'Mr. Scully, and *Sir George Gorgon.*'"

"Well, but I don't see how you have bought him; look at his votes."

"My dear John," said Mr. Crampton, jingling his watch-seals very complacently, "I am letting you into fearful secrets. The great common end of party is to buy your opponents—the great statesman buys them for nothing."

Here the attendant genius of Mr. Crampton made his appearance, and whispered something, to which the little gentleman said, "Show her ladyship in,"—when the attendant disappeared.

"John," said Mr. Crampton, with a very queer smile, "you can't stay in this room while Lady Gorgon is with me; but there is a little clerk's room behind the screen there, where you can wait until I call you."

John retired, and as he closed the door of communication, strange to say, little Mr. Crampton sprang up and said, "Confound the young ninny, he has shut the door!"

Mr. Crampton then, remembering that he wanted a map in the next room, sprang into it, left the door half open in coming out, and was in time to receive her ladyship with smiling face as she, ushered by Mr. Strongitharm, majestically sailed in.

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## CHAPTER III.

### BEHIND THE SCENES.

IN issuing from and leaving open the door of the inner room, Mr. Crampton had bestowed upon Mr. Perkins a look so peculiarly arch, that even he, simple as he was, began to imagine that some mystery was about to be cleared up, or some mighty matter to be discussed. Presently he heard the well-known voice of Lady Gorgon in conversation with his uncle. What could their talk be

about? Mr. Perkins was dying to know, and, shall we say it? advanced to the door on tiptoe and listened with all his might.

Her ladyship, that Juno of a woman, if she had not borrowed Venus's girdle to render herself irresistible, at least had adopted a tender, coaxing, wheedling, frisky tone, quite different from her ordinary dignified style of conversation. She called Mr. Crampton a naughty man, for neglecting his old friends, vowed that Sir George was quite hurt at his not coming to dine—nor fixing a day when he would come—and added, with a most engaging ogle, that she had three fine girls at home, who would perhaps make an evening pass pleasantly, even to such a gay bachelor as Mr. Crampton.

"Madam," said he, with much gravity, "the daughters of such a mother must be charming; but I, who have seen your ladyship, am, alas! proof against even them."

Both parties here heaved tremendous sighs, and affected to be wonderfully unhappy about something.

"I wish," after a pause, said Lady Gorgon—"I wish, dear Mr. Crampton, you would not use that odious title 'my ladyship;' you know it always makes me melancholy."

"Melancholy, my dear Lady Gorgon, and why?"

"Because it makes me think of another title that ought to have been mine—ours (I speak for dear Sir George's and my darling boy's sake, heaven knows, not mine). What a sad disappointment it has been to my husband, that after all his services, all the promises he has had, they have never given him his peerage. As for me, you know——"

"For you, my dear madam, I know quite well that you care for no such bauble as a coronet, except in so far as it may confer honour upon those most dear to you—excellent wife and noble mother as you are. Heigho! what a happy man is Sir George!"

Here there was another pause, and if Mr. Perkins could have seen what was taking place behind the screen, he would have beheld little Mr. Crampton looking into Lady Gorgon's face, with as love-sick a Romeo-gaze as he could possibly counterfeit; while her ladyship, blushing somewhat and turning her own grey gogglers up to heaven, received all his words for gospel, and sat fancying herself to be the best, most meritorious, and most beautiful creature in the three kingdoms.

"You men are terrible flatterers," continued she; "but you say

right: for myself I value not these empty distinctions. I am growing old, Mr. Crampton,—yes, indeed, I am, although you smile so incredulously,—and let me add, that *my* thoughts are fixed upon *higher* things than earthly crowns. But tell me, you who are all in all with Lord Bagwig, are we never to have our peerage? His Majesty, I know, is not averse; the services of dear Sir George to a member of his Majesty's august family, I know, have been appreciated in the highest quarter. Ever since the peace we have had a promise. Four hundred pounds has Sir George spent at the Herald's Office, (I myself am of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom, Mr. Crampton,) and the poor dear man's health is really ruined by the anxious, sickening feeling of hope so long delayed."

Mr. Crampton now assumed an air of much solemnity.

"My dear Lady Gorgon," said he, "will you let me be frank with you, and will you promise solemnly that what I am going to tell you shall never be repeated to a single soul?"

Lady Gorgon promised.

"Well, then, since the truth you must know, you yourselves have been in part the cause of the delay of which you complain. You gave us two votes five years ago, you now only give us one. If Sir George were to go up to the Peers, we should lose even that one vote; and would it be common sense in us to incur such a loss? Mr. Scully, the Liberal, would return another Member of his own way of thinking; and as for the Lords, we have, you know, a majority there."

"Oh, that horrid man!" said Lady Gorgon, cursing Mr. Scully in her heart, and beginning to play a rapid tattoo with her feet, "that miscreant, that traitor, that—that attorney has been our ruin."

"Horrid man if you please, but give me leave to tell you that the horrid man is not the sole cause of your ruin—if ruin you will call it. I am sorry to say that I do candidly think Ministers think that Sir George Gorgon has lost his influence in Oldborough as much through his own fault as through Mr. Scully's cleverness."

"Our own fault! Good heavens! Have we not done everything —everything that persons of our station in the county could do, to keep those misguided men? Have we not remonstrated, threatened, taken away our custom from the Mayor, established a Conservative apothecary—in fact done all that gentlemen could do? But these are such times, Mr. Crampton: the spirit of revolution is

abroad, and the great families of England are menaced by democratic insolence."

This was Sir George Gorgon's speech always after dinner, and was delivered by his lady with a great deal of stateliness. Somewhat, perhaps, to her annoyance, Mr. Crampton only smiled, shook his head, and said—

"Nonsense, my dear Lady Gorgon—pardon the phrase, but I am a plain old man, and call things by their names. Now, will you let me whisper in your ear one word of truth? You have tried all sorts of remonstrances, and exerted yourself to maintain your influence in every way, except the right one, and that is——"

"What, in heaven's name?"

"Conciliation. We know your situation in the borough. Mr. Scully's whole history, and, pardon me for saying so (but we men in office know everything), yours——"

Lady Gorgon's ears and cheeks now assumed the hottest hue of crimson. She thought of her former passages with Scully, and of the days when—but never mind when: for she suffered her veil to fall, and buried her head in the folds of her handkerchief. Vain folds! The wily little Mr. Crampton could see all that passed behind the cambric, and continued—

"Yes, madam, we know the absurd hopes that were formed by a certain attorney twenty years since. We know how, up to this moment, he boasts of certain walks——"

"With the governess—we were always with the governess!" shrieked out Lady Gorgon, clasping her hands. "She was not the wisest of women."

"With the governess of course," said Mr. Crampton, firmly. "Do you suppose that any man dare breathe a syllable against your spotless reputation? Never, my dear madam; but what I would urge is this—you have treated your disappointed admirer too cruelly."

"What! the traitor who has robbed us of our rights?"

"He never would have robbed you of your rights if you had been more kind to him. You should be gentle, madam; you should forgive him—you should be friends with him."

"With a traitor, never!"

"Think what made him a traitor, Lady Gorgon; look in your glass, and say if there be not some excuse for him? Think of the

feelings of the man who saw beauty such as yours—I am a plain man and must speak—virtue such as yours, in the possession of a rival. By heavens, madam, I think he was *right* to hate Sir George Gorgon! Would you have him allow such a prize to be ravished from him without a pang on his part?"

"He was, I believe, very much attached to me," said Lady Gorgon, quite delighted; "but you must be aware that a young man of his station in life could not look up to a person of my rank."

"Surely not: it was monstrous pride and arrogance in Mr. Scully. But *que voulez-vous?* Such is the world's way. Scully could not help loving you—who that knows you can? I am a plain man, and say what I think. He loves you still. Why make an enemy of him, who would at a word be at your feet? Dearest Lady Gorgon, listen to me. Sir George Gorgon and Mr. Scully have already met—their meeting was our contrivance. It is for our interest, for yours, that they should be friends. If there were two Ministerial Members for Oldborough, do you think your husband's peerage would be less secure? I am not at liberty to tell you all I know on this subject; but do, I entreat you, be reconciled to him."

And after a little more conversation, which was carried on by Mr. Crampton in the same tender way, this important interview closed, and Lady Gorgon, folding her shawl round her, threaded certain mysterious passages and found her way to her carriage in Whitehall.

"I hope you have not been listening, you rogue?" said Mr. Crampton to his nephew, who blushed most absurdly by way of answer. "You would have heard great State secrets, if you had dared to do so. That woman is perpetually here, and if peerages are to be had for the asking, she ought to have been a duchess by this time. I would not have admitted her but for a reason that I have. Go you now and ponder upon what you have heard and seen. Be on good terms with Scully, and, above all, speak not a word concerning our interview—no, not a word even to your mistress. By the way, I presume, sir, you will recall your resignation?"

The bewildered Perkins was about to stammer out a speech, when his uncle, cutting it short, pushed him gently out of the door.

* * * * *

At the period when the important events occurred which have

been recorded here, parties ran very high, and a mighty struggle for the vacant Speakership was about to come on. The Right Honourable Robert Pincher was the Ministerial candidate, and Sir Charles Macabaw was patronized by the Opposition. The two Members for Oldborough of course took different sides, the baronet being of the Pincher faction, while Mr. William Pitt Scully strongly supported the Macabaw party.

It was Mr. Scully's intention to deliver an impromptu speech upon the occasion of the election, and he and his faithful Perkins prepared it between them: for the latter gentleman had wisely kept his uncle's counsel and his own, and Mr. Scully was quite ignorant of the conspiracy that was brooding. Indeed so artfully had that young Machiavel of a Perkins conducted himself, that when asked by his patron whether he had given up his place in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office, he replied that "he *had* tendered his resignation," but did not say one word about having recalled it.

"You were right, my boy, quite right," said Mr. Scully. "A man of uncompromising principles should make no compromise." And herewith he sat down and wrote off a couple of letters, one to Mr. Hawksby, telling him that the place in the Sealing-Wax Office was, as he had reason to know, vacant; and the other to his nephew, stating that it was to be his. "Under the rose, my dear Bob," added Mr. Scully, "it will cost you five hundred pounds; but you cannot invest your money better."

It is needless to state that the affair was to be conducted "with the strictest secrecy and honour," and that the money was to pass through Mr. Scully's hands.

While, however, the great Pincher and Macabaw question was yet undecided, an event occurred to Mr. Scully, which had a great influence upon his after-life. A second grand banquet was given at the Earl of Mantrap's: Lady Mantrap requested him to conduct Lady Gorgon to dinner; and the latter, with a charming timidity, and a gracious melancholy look into his face (after which her veined eyelids veiled her azure eyes), put her hand into the trembling one of Mr. Scully and said, as much as looks could say, "Forgive and forget."

Down went Scully to dinner. There were dukes on his right hand and earls on his left; there were but two persons without title in the midst of that glittering assemblage; the very servants looked

like noblemen. The cook had done wonders; the wines were cool and rich, and Lady Gorgon was splendid! What attention did everybody pay to her and to him! Why *would* she go on gazing into his face with that tender, imploring look? In other words, Scully, after partaking of soup and fish, (he, during their discussion, had been thinking over all the former love-and-hate passages between himself and Lady Gorgon,) turned very red, and began talking to her.

"Were you not at the opera on Tuesday?" began he, assuming at once the airs of a man of fashion. "I thought I caught a glimpse of you in the Duchess of Diddlebury's box."

"Opera, Mr. Scully?" (pronouncing the word "Scully" with the utmost softness.) "Ah, no! we seldom go, and yet too often. For serious persons the enchantments of that place are too dangerous. I am so nervous—so delicate; the smallest trifle so agitates, depresses, or irritates me, that I dare not yield myself up to the excitement of music. I am too passionately attached to it; and, shall I tell you? it has such a strange influence upon me, that the smallest false note almost drives me to distraction, and for that very reason I hardly ever go to a concert or a ball."

"Egad," thought Scully, "I recollect when she would dance down a matter of five-and-forty couple, and jingle away at the 'Battle of Prague' all day."

She continued: "Don't you recollect, I do, with—oh, what regret!—that day at Oldborough race-ball, when I behaved with such sad rudeness to you? You will scarcely believe me, and yet I assure you 'tis the fact, the music had made me almost mad. Do let me ask your pardon for my conduct. I was not myself. Oh, Mr. Scully! I am no worldly woman; I know my duties, and I feel my wrongs. Nights and nights have I lain awake weeping and thinking of that unhappy day—that I should ever speak so to an old friend: for we *were* old friends, were we not?"

Scully did not speak; but his eyes were bursting out of his head, and his face was the exact colour of a deputy-lieutenant's uniform.

"That I should ever forget myself and you so! How I have been longing for this opportunity to ask you to forgive me! I asked Lady Mantrap, when I heard you were to be here, to invite me to her party. Come, I know you will forgive me—your eyes

say you will. You used to look so in old days, and forgive me my caprices *then.* Do give me a little wine—we will drink to the memory of old days."

Her eyes filled with tears; and poor Scully's hand caused such a rattling and trembling of the glass and the decanter that the Duke of Doldrum—who had been, during the course of this whispered sentimentality, describing a famous run with the Queen's hounds at the top of his voice—stopped at the jingling of the glass, and his tale was lost for ever. Scully hastily drank his wine, and Lady Gorgon turned round to her next neighbour, a little gentleman in black, between whom and herself certain conscious looks passed.

"I am glad poor Sir George is not here," said he, smiling.

Lady Gorgon said, "Pooh, for shame!" The little gentleman was no other than Josiah Crampton, Esq., that eminent financier, and he was now going through the curious calculation before mentioned, by which you *buy a man for nothing.* He intended to pay the very same price for Sir George Gorgon, too, but there was no need to tell the baronet so; only of this the reader must be made aware.

While Mr. Crampton was conducting this intrigue, which was to bring a new recruit to the Ministerial ranks, his mighty spirit condescended to ponder upon subjects of infinitely less importance, and to arrange plans for the welfare of his nephew and the young woman to whom he had made a present of his heart. These young persons, as we said before, had arranged to live in Mr. Perkins's own house in Bedford Row. It was of a peculiar construction, and might more properly be called a house and a half: for a snug little tenement of four chambers protruded from the back of the house into the garden. These rooms communicated with the drawing-rooms occupied by Mr. Scully; and Perkins, who acted as his friend and secretary, used frequently to sit in the one nearest the Member's study, in order that he might be close at hand to confer with that great man. The rooms had a private entrance too, were newly decorated, and in them the young couple proposed to live; the kitchen and garrets being theirs likewise. What more could they need? We are obliged to be particular in describing these apartments, for extraordinary events occurred therein.

To say the truth, until the present period Mr. Crampton had taken no great interest in his nephew's marriage, or, indeed, in the

young man himself. The old gentleman was of a saturnine turn, and inclined to undervalue the qualities of Mr. Perkins, which were idleness, simplicity, enthusiasm, and easy good-nature.

"Such fellows never do anything in the world," he would say, and for such he had accordingly the most profound contempt. But when, after John Perkins's repeated entreaties, he had been induced to make the acquaintance of Miss Gorgon, he became instantly charmed with her, and warmly espoused her cause against her overbearing relations.

At his suggestion she wrote back to decline Sir George Gorgon's peremptory invitation, and hinted at the same time that she had attained an age and a position which enabled her to be the mistress of her own actions. To this letter there came an answer from Lady Gorgon which we shall not copy, but which simply stated that Miss Lucy Gorgon's conduct was unchristian, ungrateful, unladylike, and immodest; that the Gorgon family disowned her for the future, and left her at liberty to form whatever base connections she pleased.

"A pretty world this," said Mr. Crampton, in a great rage, when the letter was shown to him. "This same fellow, Scully, dissuades my nephew from taking a place, because Scully wants it for himself. This prude of a Lady Gorgon cries out shame, and disowns an innocent amiable girl: she a heartless jilt herself once, and a heartless flirt now. The Pharisees, the Pharisees! And to call mine a base family, too!"

Now, Lady Gorgon did not in the least know Mr. Crampton's connection with Mr. Perkins, or she would have been much more guarded in her language; but whether she knew it or not, the old gentleman felt a huge indignation, and determined to have his revenge.

"That's right, uncle! *Shall* I call Gorgon out?" said the impetuous young Perkins, who was all for blood.

"John, you are a fool," said his uncle. "You shall have a better revenge: you shall be married from Sir George Gorgon's house, and you shall see Mr. William Pitt Scully sold for nothing." This to the veteran diplomatist seemed to be the highest triumph which man could possibly enjoy.

It was very soon to take place:, and, as has been the case ever since the world began, woman, lovely woman was to be the cause

Scully's fall. The tender scene at Lord Mantrap's was followed by many others equally sentimental. Sir George Gorgon called upon his colleague the very next day, and brought with him a card from Lady Gorgon inviting Mr. Scully to dinner. The attorney eagerly accepted the invitation, was received in Baker Street by the whole amiable family with much respectful cordiality, and was pressed to repeat his visits as country neighbours should. More than once did he call, and somehow always at the hour when Sir George was away at his club, or riding in the Park, or elsewhere engaged. Sir George Gorgon was very old, very feeble, very much shattered in constitution. Lady Gorgon used to impart her fears to Mr. Scully every time he called there, and the sympathizing attorney used to console her as best he might. Sir George's country agent neglected the property—his lady consulted Mr. Scully concerning it. He knew to a fraction how large her jointure was; how she was to have Gorgon Castle for her life; and how, in the event of the young baronet's death (he, too, was a sickly poor boy), the chief part of the estates, bought by her money, would be at her absolute disposal.

"What a pity these odious politics prevent me from having you for our agent," would Lady Gorgon say; and indeed Scully thought it was a pity too. Ambitious Scully! what wild notions filled his brain. He used to take leave of Lady Gorgon and ruminate upon these things; and when he was gone, Sir George and her ladyship used to laugh.

"If we can but commit him—if we can but make him vote for Pincher," said the General, "my peerage is secure. Hawksby and Crampton as good as told me so."

The point had been urged upon Mr. Scully repeatedly and adroitly. "Is not Pincher a more experienced man than Macabaw?" would Sir George say to his guest over their wine. Scully allowed it. "Can't you vote for him on personal grounds, and say so in the House?" Scully wished he could,—how he wished he could! Every time the General coughed, Scully saw his friend's desperate situation more and more, and thought how pleasant it would be to be lord of Gorgon Castle. "Knowing my property," cried Sir George, "as you do, and with your talents and integrity, what a comfort it would be could I leave you as guardian to my boy! But these cursed politics prevent it, my dear fellow. Why *will* you be a Radical?" And Scully cursed politics too. "Hang the low-bred

rogue," added Sir George, when William Pitt Scully left the house: "he will do everything but promise."

"My dear General," said Lady Gorgon, sidling up to him and patting him on his old yellow cheek—"My dear Georgy, tell me one thing,—are you jealous?"

"Jealous, my dear! and jealous of *that* fellow—pshaw!"

"Well, then, give me leave, and you shall have the promise to-morrow."

* * * * *

To-morrow arrived. It was a remarkably fine day, and in the forenoon Mr. Perkins gave his accustomed knock at Scully's study, which was only separated from his own sitting-room by a double door. John had wisely followed his uncle's advice, and was on the best terms with the honourable Member.

"Here are a few sentences," said he, "which I think may suit your purpose. Great public services—undeniable merit—years of integrity—cause of reform, and Macabaw for ever!" He put down the paper. It was, in fact, a speech in favour of Mr. Macabaw.

"Hush," said Scully, rather surlily: for he was thinking how disagreeable it was to support Macabaw; and besides, there were clerks in the room, whom the thoughtless Perkins had not at first perceived. As soon as that gentleman saw them, "You are busy, I see," continued he in a lower tone. "I came to say that I must be off duty to-day, for I am engaged to take a walk with some ladies of my acquaintance."

So saying, the light-hearted young man placed his hat unceremoniously on his head, and went off through his own door, humming a song. He was in such high spirits that he did not even think of closing the doors of communication, and Scully looked after him with a sneer.

"Ladies, forsooth," thought he; "I know who they are. This precious girl that he is fooling with, for one, I suppose." He was right: Perkins was off on the wings of love, to see Miss Lucy; and she and aunt Biggs and uncle Crampton had promised this very day to come and look at the apartments which Mrs. John Perkins was to occupy with her happy husband.

"Poor devil," so continued Mr. Scully's meditations, "it is almost too bad to do him out of his place; but my Bob wants it, and John's girl has, I hear, seven thousand pounds. His uncle will get

him another place before all that money is spent." And herewith Mr. Scully began conning the speech which Perkins had made for him.

He had not read it more than six times,—in truth, he was getting it by heart,—when his head clerk came to him from the front room, bearing a card: a footman had brought it, who said his lady was waiting below. Lady Gorgon's name was on the card! To seize his hat and rush downstairs was, with Mr. Scully, the work of an infinitesimal portion of time.

It was indeed Lady Gorgon, in her Gorgonian chariot.

"Mr. Scully," said she, popping her head out of window and smiling in a most engaging way, "I want to speak to you on something very particular *indeed*"—and she held him out her hand. Scully pressed it most tenderly: he hoped all heads in Bedford Row were at the windows to see him. "I can't ask you into the carriage, for you see the governess is with me, and I want to talk secrets to you."

"Shall I go and make a little promenade?" said mademoiselle, innocently. And her mistress hated her for that speech.

"No. Mr. Scully, I am sure, will let me come in for five minutes?"

Mr. Scully was only too happy. My lady descended and walked upstairs, leaning on the happy solicitor's arm. But how should he manage? The front room was consecrated to clerks; there were clerks too, as ill-luck would have it, in his private room. "Perkins is out for the day," thought Scully; "I will take her into his room." And into Perkins's room he took her—ay, and he shut the double doors after him too, and trembled as he thought of his own happiness.

"What a charming little study," said Lady Gorgon, seating herself. And indeed it was very pretty: for Perkins had furnished it beautifully, and laid out a neat tray with cakes, a cold fowl, and sherry, to entertain his party withal. "And do you bachelors always live so well?" continued she, pointing to the little cold collation.

Mr. Scully looked rather blank when he saw it, and a dreadful suspicion crossed his soul; but there was no need to trouble Lady Gorgon with explanations: therefore, at once, and with much presence of mind, he asked her to partake of his bachelor's fare (she would refuse Mr. Scully nothing that day). A pretty sight would it have

been for young Perkins to see strangers so unceremoniously devouring his feast. She drank—Mr. Scully drank—and so emboldened was he by the draught that he actually seated himself by the side of Lady Gorgon, on John Perkins's new sofa.

Her ladyship had of course something to say to him. She was a pious woman, and had suddenly conceived a violent wish for building a chapel-of-ease at Oldborough, to which she entreated him to subscribe. She enlarged upon the benefits that the town would derive from it, spoke of Sunday-schools, sweet spiritual instruction, and the duty of all well-minded persons to give aid to the scheme.

"I will subscribe a hundred pounds," said Scully, at the end of her ladyship's harangue: "would I not do anything for you?"

"Thank you, thank you, dear Mr. Scully," said the enthusiastic woman. (How the "dear" went burning through his soul!) "Ah!" added she, "if you *would* but do anything for me—if you, who are so eminently, so truly distinguished, in a religious point of view, would but see the truth in politics too; and if I could see your name among those of the true patriot party in this empire, how blest—oh! how blest, should I be! Poor Sir George often says he should go to his grave happy, could he but see you the guardian of his boy; and I, your old friend, (for we *were* friends, William,) how have I wept to think of you as one of those who are bringing our monarchy to ruin. Do, do promise me this too!" And she took his hand and pressed it between hers.

The heart of William Pitt Scully, during this speech, was thumping up and down with a frightful velocity and strength. His old love, the agency of the Gorgon property—the dear widow—five thousand a year clear—a thousand delicious hopes rushed madly through his brain, and almost took away his reason. And there she sat—she, the loved one, pressing his hand and looking softly into his eyes.

Down, down he plumped on his knees.

"Juliana!" shrieked he, "don't take away your hand! My love—my only love!—speak but those blessed words again! Call me William once more, and do with me what you will."

Juliana cast down her eyes and said, in the very smallest type,

"William!"

* * * * *

—when the door opened, and in walked Mr. Crampton, leading Mrs. Biggs, who could hardly contain herself for laughing, and Mr. John

Perkins, who was squeezing the arm of Miss Lucy. They had heard every word of the two last speeches.

For at the very moment when Lady Gorgon had stopped at Mr. Scully's door, the four above-named individuals had issued from Great James Street into Bedford Row.

Lucy cried out that it was her aunt's carriage, and they all saw Mr. Scully come out, bare-headed, in the sunshine, and my lady descend, and the pair go into the house. They meanwhile entered by Mr. Perkins's own private door, and had been occupied in examining the delightful rooms on the ground-floor, which were to be his dining-room and library—from which they ascended a stair to visit the other two rooms, which were to form Mrs. John Perkins's drawing-room and bedroom. Now whether it was that they trod softly, or that the stairs were covered with a grand new carpet and drugget, as was the case, or that the party within were too much occupied in themselves to heed any outward disturbances, I know not; but Lucy, who was advancing with John, (he was saying something about one of the apartments, the rogue !)—Lucy suddenly started and whispered, "There is somebody in the rooms!" and at that instant began the speech already reported, "*Thank you, thank you, dear Mr. Scully,*" &c. &c., which was delivered by Lady Gorgon in a full, clear voice; for, to do her ladyship justice, *she* had not one single grain of love for Mr. Scully, and, during the delivery of her little oration, was as cool as the coolest cucumber.

Then began the impassioned rejoinder, to which the four listened on the landing-place; and then the little "*William,*" as narrated above: at which juncture Mr. Crampton thought proper to rattle at the door, and after a brief pause, to enter with his party.

"William" had had time to bounce off his knees, and was on a chair at the other end of the room.

"What, Lady Gorgon!" said Mr. Crampton, with excellent surprise, "how delighted I am to see you! Always, I see, employed in works of charity," (the chapel-of-ease paper was on her knees,) "and on such an occasion, too,—it is really the most wonderful coincidence! My dear madam, here is a silly fellow, a nephew of mine, who is going to marry a silly girl, a niece of your own."

"Sir, I—" began Lady Gorgon, rising.

"They heard every word," whispered Mr. Crampton, eagerly. "Come forward, Mr. Perkins, and show yourself." Mr. Perkins made

a genteel bow. "Miss Lucy, please to shake hands with your aunt; and this, my dear madam, is Mrs. Biggs, of Mecklenburgh Square, who, if she were not too old, might marry a gentleman in the Treasury, who is your very humble servant." And with this gallant speech, old Mr. Crampton began helping everybody to sherry and cake.

As for William Pitt Scully, he had disappeared, evaporated, in the most absurd, sneaking way imaginable. Lady Gorgon made good her retreat presently, with much dignity, her countenance undismayed, and her face turned resolutely to the foe.

* * * * *

About five days afterwards, that memorable contest took place in the House of Commons, in which the partisans of Mr. Macabaw were so very nearly getting him the Speakership. On the day that the report of the debate appeared in *The Times*, there appeared also an announcement in the *Gazette* as follows:—

"The King has been pleased to appoint John Perkins, Esq., to be Deputy-Subcomptroller of his Majesty's Tape Office and Custos of the Sealing-Wax Department."

Mr. Crampton showed this to his nephew with great glee, and was chuckling to think how Mr. William Pitt Scully would be annoyed, who had expected the place, when Perkins burst out laughing and said, "By heavens, here is my own speech! Scully has spoken every word of it; he has only put in Mr. Pincher's name in the place of Mr. Macabaw's."

"He is ours now," responded his uncle, "and I told you *we would have him for nothing*. I told you, too, that you should be married from Sir George Gorgon's, and here is proof of it."

It was a letter from Lady Gorgon, in which she said that, "had she known Mr. Perkins to be a nephew of her friend Mr. Crampton, she never for a moment would have opposed his marriage with her niece, and she had written that morning to her dear Lucy, begging that the marriage breakfast should take place in Baker Street."

"It shall be in Mecklenburgh Square," said John Perkins, stoutly; and in Mecklenburgh Square it was.

William Pitt Scully, Esq., was, as Mr. Crampton said, hugely annoyed at the loss of the place for his nephew. He had still, however, his hopes to look forward to, but these were unluckily dashed by the coming in of the Whigs. As for Sir George Gorgon, when he

came to ask about his peerage, Hawksby told him that they could not afford to lose him in the Commons, for a Liberal Member would infallibly fill his place.

And now that the Tories are out and the Whigs are in, strange to say a Liberal does fill his place. This Liberal is no other than Sir George Gorgon himself, who is still longing to be a lord, and his lady is still devout and intriguing. So that the Members for Oldborough have changed sides, and taunt each other with apostasy, and hate each other cordially. Mr. Crampton still chuckles over the manner in which he tricked them both, and talks of those five minutes during which he stood on the landing-place, and hatched and executed his "Bedford-Row Conspiracy."

# A LITTLE DINNER AT TIMMINS'S.

I.

MR. AND MRS. FITZROY TIMMINS live in Lilliput Street, that neat little street which runs at right angles with the Park and Brobdingnag Gardens. It is a very genteel neighbourhood, and I need not say they are of a good family.

Especially Mrs. Timmins, as her mamma is always telling Mr. T. They are Suffolk people, and distantly related to the Right Honourable the Earl of Bungay.

Besides his house in Lilliput Street, Mr. Timmins has chambers in Fig-tree Court, Temple, and goes the Northern Circuit.

The other day, when there was a slight difference about the payment of fees between the great Parliamentary Counsel and the Solicitors, Stoke and Pogers, of Great George Street, sent the papers of the Lough Foyle and Lough Corrib Junction Railway to Mr. Fitzroy Timmins, who was so elated that he instantly purchased a couple of looking-glasses for his drawing-rooms (the front room is 16 by 12, and the back, a tight but elegant apartment, 10 ft. 6 by 8 ft. 4), a coral for the baby, two new dresses for Mrs. Timmins, and a little rosewood desk, at the Pantechnicon, for which Rosa had long been sighing, with crumpled legs, emerald-green and gold morocco top, and drawers all over.

Mrs. Timmins is a very pretty poetess (her "Lines to a Faded Tulip" and her "Plaint of Plinlimmon" appeared in one of last year's Keepsakes); and Fitzroy, as he impressed a kiss on the snowy forehead of his bride, pointed out to her, in one of the innumerable pockets of the desk, an elegant ruby-tipped pen, and six charming little gilt blank books, marked "My Books," which Mrs. Fitzroy

might fill, he said, (he is an Oxford man, and very polite,) "with the delightful productions of her Muse." Besides these books, there was pink paper, paper with crimson edges, lace paper, all stamped with R. F. T. (Rosa Fitzroy Timmins) and the hand and battle-axe, the crest of the Timminses (and borne at Ascalon by Roaldus de Timmins, a crusader, who is now buried in the Temple Church, next to Serjeant Snooks), and yellow, pink, light-blue and other scented sealing-waxes, at the service of Rosa when she chose to correspond with her friends.

Rosa, you may be sure, jumped with joy at the sight of this sweet present; called her Charles (his first name is Samuel, but they have sunk that) the best of men; embraced him a great number of times, to the edification of her buttony little page, who stood at the landing; and as soon as he was gone to chambers, took the new pen and a sweet sheet of paper, and began to compose a poem.

"What shall it be about?" was naturally her first thought. "What should be a young mother's first inspiration?" Her child lay on the sofa asleep before her; and she began in her neatest hand—

"LINES

"ON MY SON, BUNGAY DE BRACY GASHLEIGH TYMMYNS, AGED TEN MONTHS.

"*Tuesday.*

"How beautiful! how beautiful thou seemest,
My boy, my precious one, my rosy babe!
Kind angels hover round thee, as thou dreamest:
Soft lashes hide thy beauteous azure eye which gleamest."

"Gleamest? thine eye which gleamest? Is that grammar?" thought Rosa, who had puzzled her little brains for some time with this absurd question, when the baby woke. Then the cook came up to ask about dinner; then Mrs. Fundy slipped over from No. 27 (they are opposite neighbours, and made an acquaintance through Mrs. Fundy's macaw); and a thousand things happened. Finally, there was no rhyme to babe except Tippoo Saib (against whom Major Gashleigh, Rosa's grandfather, had distinguished himself), and so she gave up the little poem about her De Bracy.

Nevertheless, when Fitzroy returned from chambers to take a walk with his wife in the Park, as he peeped though the rich tapestry hanging which divided the two drawing-rooms, he found his dear girl

still seated at the desk, and writing, writing away with her ruby pen as fast as it could scribble.

"What a genius that child has!" he said; "why, she is a second Mrs. Norton!" and advanced smiling to peep over her shoulder and see what pretty thing Rosa was composing.

It was not poetry, though, that she was writing, and Fitz read as follows:—

"*Lilliput Street, Tuesday, 22nd May.*

"Mr. and Mrs. Fitzroy Tymmyns request the pleasure of Sir Thomas and Lady Kicklebury's company at dinner on Wednesday, at 7½ o'clock."

"My dear!" exclaimed the barrister, pulling a long face.

"Law, Fitzroy!" cried the beloved of his bosom, "how you do startle one!"

"Give a dinner-party with our means!" said he.

"Ain't you making a fortune, you miser?" Rosa said. "Fifteen guineas a day is four thousand five hundred a year; I've calculated it." And, so saying, she rose and taking hold of his whiskers (which are as fine as those of any man of his circuit,) she put her mouth

close up against his and did something to his long face, which quite changed the expression of it; and which the little page heard outside the door.

"Our dining-room won't hold ten," he said.

"We'll only ask twenty, my love. Ten are sure to refuse in his season, when everybody is giving parties. Look, here is the list."

"Earl and Countess of Bungay, and Lady Barbara Saint Mary's."

"You are dying to get a lord into the house," Timmins said (*he* has not altered his name in Fig-tree Court yet, and therefore I am not so affected as to call him *Tymmyns*).

"Law, my dear, they are our cousins, and must be asked," Rosa said.

"Let us put down my sister and Tom Crowder, then."

"Blanche Crowder is really so *very* fat, Fitzroy," his wife said, 'and our rooms are so *very* small."

Fitz laughed. "You little rogue," he said, "Lady Bungay weighs two of Blanche, even when she's not in the f———"

"Fiddlesticks!" Rose cried out. "Doctor Crowder really cannot be admitted: he makes such a noise eating his soup, that it is

really quite disagreeable." And she imitated the gurgling noise performed by the Doctor while inhausting his soup, in such a funny way, that Fitz saw inviting him was out of the question.

"Besides, we mustn't have too many relations," Rosa went on. "Mamma, of course, is coming. She doesn't like to be asked in the evening; and she'll bring her silver bread-basket and her candlesticks, which are very rich and handsome."

"And you complain of Blanche for being too stout!" groaned out Timmins.

"Well, well, don't be in a pet," said little Rosa. "The girls won't come to dinner; but will bring their music afterwards." And she went on with the list.

"Sir Thomas and Lady Kicklebury, 2. No saying no: we *must* ask them, Charles. They are rich people, and any room in their house in Brobdingnag Gardens would swallow up *our* humble cot. But to people in *our* position in *society* they will be glad enough to come. The city people are glad to mix with the old families."

"Very good," says Fitz, with a sad face of assent—and Mrs. Timmins went on reading her list.

"Mr. and Mrs. Topham Sawyer, Belgravine Place."

"Mrs. Sawyer hasn't asked you all the season. She gives herself the airs of an empress; and when ——"

"One's Member, you know, my dear, one must have," Rosa replied, with much dignity; as if the presence of the representative of her native place would be a protection to her dinner. And a note was written and transported by the page early next morning to the mansion of the Sawyers, in Belgravine Place.

The Topham Sawyers had just come down to breakfast; Mrs. T. in her large dust-coloured morning dress and Madonna front (she looks rather scraggy of a morning, but I promise you her ringlets and figure will stun you of an evening); and having read the note, the following dialogue passed:—

*Mrs. Topham Sawyer.*—"Well, upon my word, I don't know where things will end. Mr. Sawyer, the Timminses have asked us to dinner."

*Mr. Topham Sawyer.*—"Ask us to dinner! What d—— impudence!"

*Mrs. Topham Sawyer.*—"The most dangerous and insolent revolu-

tionary principles are abroad, Mr. Sawyer; and I shall write and hint as much to these persons."

*Mr. Topham Sawyer.*—"No, d—— it, Joanna: they are my constituents and we must go. Write a civil note, and say we will come to their party." (*He resumes the perusal of 'The Times,' and Mrs. Topham Sawyer writes*)—

"My dear Rosa,

"We shall have *great pleasure* in joining your little party. I do not reply in the third person, as *we are old friends*, you know, and

*country neighbours*. I hope your mamma is well: present my *kindest remembrances* to her, and I hope we shall see much MORE of each other in the summer, when we go down to the Sawpits (for going abroad is out of the question in these *dreadful times*). With a hundred kisses to your dear little *pet*,

"Believe me your attached

"J. T. S."

She said *Pet*, because she did not know whether Rosa's child was a girl or boy: and Mrs. Timmins was very much pleased with the kind and gracious nature of the reply to her invitation.

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II.

THE next persons whom little Mrs. Timmins was bent upon asking, were Mr. and Mrs. John Rowdy, of the firm of Stumpy, Rowdy and Co., of Brobdingnag Gardens, of the Prairie, Putney, and of Lombard Street, City.

Mrs. Timmins and Mrs. Rowdy had been brought up at the same school together, and there was always a little rivalry between them, from the day when they contended for the French prize at school to last week, when each had a stall at the Fancy Fair for the benefit of the Daughters of Decayed Muffin-men; and when Mrs. Timmins danced against Mrs. Rowdy in the Scythe Mazurka at the Polish Ball, headed by Mrs. Hugh Slasher. Rowdy took twenty-three pounds more than Timmins in the Muffin transaction (for she had possession of a kettle-holder worked by the hands of R–y–lty, which brought crowds to her stall); but in the Mazurka Rosa conquered: she has the prettiest little foot possible (which in a red boot and silver heel looked so lovely that even the Chinese ambassador remarked it), whereas Mrs. Rowdy's foot is no trifle, as Lord Cornbury acknowledged when it came down on his lordship's boot-tip as they danced together amongst the Scythes.

"These people are ruining themselves," said Mrs. John Rowdy to her husband, on receiving the pink note. It was carried round by that rogue of a buttony page in the evening; and he walked to

Brobdingnag Gardens, and in the Park afterwards, with a young lady who is kitchen-maid at 27, and who is not more than fourteen years older than little Buttons.

"These people are ruining themselves," said Mrs. John to her husband. "Rosa says she has asked the Bungays."

"Bungays indeed! Timmins was always a tuft-hunter," said Rowdy, who had been at college with the barrister, and who, for his own part, has no more objection to a lord than you or I have; and adding, "Hang him, what business has *he* to be giving parties?" allowed Mrs. Rowdy, nevertheless, to accept Rosa's invitation.

"When I go to business to-morrow, I will just have a look at Mr. Fitz's account," Mr. Rowdy thought; "and if it is overdrawn, as it usually is, why . . ." The announcement of Mrs. Rowdy's brougham here put an end to this agreeable train of thought; and the banker and his lady stepped into it to join a snug little family-party of two-and-twenty, given by Mr. and Mrs. Secondchop at their great house on the other side of the Park.

"Rowdys 2, Bungays 3, ourselves and mamma 3, 2 Sawyers," calculated little Rosa.

"General Gulpin," Rosa continued, "eats a great deal, and is very stupid, but he looks well at table with his star and ribbon. Let us put *him* down!" and she noted down "Sir Thomas and Lady Gulpin, 2. Lord Castlemouldy, 1."

"You will make your party abominably genteel and stupid," groaned Timmins. "Why don't you ask some of our old friends? Old Mrs. Portman has asked us twenty times, I am sure, within the last two years."

"And the last time we went there, there was pea-soup for dinner!" Mrs. Timmins said, with a look of ineffable scorn.

"Nobody can have been kinder than the Hodges have always been to us; and some sort of return we might make, I think."

"Return, indeed! A pretty sound it is on the staircase to hear "Mr. and Mrs. 'Odge and Miss 'Odges" pronounced by Billiter, who always leaves his *h*'s out. No, no: see attorneys at your chambers, my dear—but what could the poor creatures do in *our* society?" And so, one by one, Timmins's old friends were tried and eliminated by Mrs. Timmins, just as if she had been an Irish Attorney-General, and they so many Catholics on Mr. Mitchel's jury.

Mrs. Fitzroy insisted that the party should be of her very best company. Funnyman, the great wit, was asked, because of his jokes; and Mrs. Butt, on whom he practises; and Potter, who is asked because everybody else asks him; and Mr. Ranville Ranville of the Foreign Office, who might give some news of the Spanish squabble; and Botherby, who has suddenly sprung up into note because he is intimate with the French Revolution, and visits Ledru-Rollin and Lamartine. And these, with a couple more who are *amis de la maison*, made up the twenty, whom Mrs. Timmins thought she might safely invite to her little dinner.

But the deuce of it was, that when the answers to the invitations came back, everybody accepted! Here was a pretty quandary. How they were to get twenty into their dining-room was a calculation which poor Timmins could not solve at all; and he paced up and down the little room in dismay.

"Pooh!" said Rosa with a laugh. "Your sister Blanche looked very well in one of my dresses last year; and you know how stout she is. We will find some means to accommodate them all, depend upon it."

Mrs. John Rowdy's note to dear Rosa, accepting the latter's invitation, was a very gracious and kind one; and Mrs. Fitz showed it to her husband when he came back from chambers. But there was another note which had arrived for him by this time from Mr. Rowdy—or rather from the firm; and to the effect that Mr. F. Timmins had overdrawn his account 28*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.*, and was requested to pay that sum to his obedient servants, Stumpy, Rowdy and Co.

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And Timmins did not like to tell his wife that the contending parties in the Lough Foyle and Lough Corrib Railroad had come to a settlement, and that the fifteen guineas a day had consequently determined. "I have had seven days of it, though," he thought; "and that will be enough to pay for the desk, the dinner, and the glasses, and make all right with Stumpy and Rowdy.

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## III.

THE cards for dinner having been issued, it became the duty of Mrs. Timmins to make further arrangements respecting the invitations to the tea-party which was to follow the more substantial meal.

These arrangements are difficult, as any lady knows who is in the habit of entertaining her friends. There are—

People who are offended if you ask them to tea whilst others have been asked to dinner;

People who are offended if you ask them to tea at all; and cry out furiously, "Good heavens! Jane my love, why do these Timminses suppose that I am to leave my dinner-table to attend their —— soirée?" (the dear reader may fill up the —— to any strength, according to his liking)—or, "Upon my word, William my dear, it is too much to ask us to pay twelve shillings for a brougham, and to spend I don't know how much in gloves, just to make our curtsies in Mrs. Timmins's little drawing-room." Mrs. Moser made the latter remark about the Timmins affair, while the former was

uttered by Mr. Grumpley, barrister-at-law, to his lady, in Gloucester Place.

That there are people who are offended if you don't ask them at all, is a point which I suppose nobody will question. Timmins's earliest friend in life was Simmins, whose wife and family have taken a cottage at Mortlake for the season.

"We can't ask them to come out of the country," Rosa said to her Fitzroy—(between ourselves, she was delighted that Mrs. Simmins was out of the way, and was as jealous of her as every well-regulated woman should be of her husband's female friends)—"we can't ask them to come so far for the evening."

"Why, no, certainly," said Fitzroy, who has himself no very great opinion of a tea-party; and so the Simminses were cut out of the list.

And what was the consequence? The consequence was, that Simmins and Timmins cut when they met at Westminster; that Mrs. Simmins sent back all the books which she had borrowed from Rosa, with a withering note of thanks; that Rosa goes about saying that Mrs. Simmins squints; that Mrs. S., on her side, declares that Rosa is crooked, and behaved shamefully to Captain Hicks in marrying Fitzroy over him, though she was forced to do it by her mother, and prefers the Captain to her husband to this day. If, in a word, these two men could be made to fight, I believe their wives would not be displeased; and the reason of all this misery, rage, and dissension, lies in a poor little twopenny dinner-party in Lilliput Street.

Well, the guests, both for before and after meat, having been asked, old Mrs. Gashleigh, Rosa's mother—(and, by consequence, Fitzroy's *dear* mother-in-law, though I promise you that "dear" is particularly sarcastic)—Mrs. Gashleigh of course was sent for, and came with Miss Eliza Gashleigh, who plays on the guitar, and Emily, who limps a little, but plays sweetly on the concertina. They live close by—trust them for that. Your mother-in-law is always within hearing, thank our stars for the attention of the dear women. The Gashleighs, I say, live close by, and came early on the morning after Rosa's notes had been issued for the dinner.

When Fitzroy, who was in his little study, which opens into his little dining-room—one of those absurd little rooms which ought to be called a gentleman's pantry, and is scarcely bigger than a shower-

bath, or a state cabin in a ship—when Fitzroy heard his mother-in-law's knock, and her well-known scuffling and chattering in the passage—in which she squeezed up young Buttons, the page, while she put questions to him regarding baby, and the cook's health, and whether she had taken what Mrs. Gashleigh had sent overnight, and the housemaid's health, and whether Mr. Timmins had gone to chambers or not—and when, after this preliminary chatter, Buttons flung open the door, announcing—"Mrs. Gashleigh and the young ladies," Fitzroy laid down his *Times* newspaper with an expression that had best not be printed here, and took his hat and walked away.

Mrs. Gashleigh has never liked him since he left off calling her mamma, and kissing her. But he said he could not stand it any longer—he was hanged if he would. So he went away to chambers, leaving the field clear to Rosa, mamma, and the two dear girls.

—Or to one of them, rather: for before leaving the house, he thought he would have a look at little Fitzroy upstairs in the nursery, and he found the child in the hands of his maternal aunt Eliza, who was holding him and pinching him as if he had been her guitar, I suppose; so that the little fellow bawled pitifully—and his father finally quitted the premises.

No sooner was he gone, although the party was still a fortnight off, than the women pounced upon his little study, and began to put it in order. Some of his papers they pushed up over the bookcase, some they put behind the Encyclopædia, some they crammed into the drawers——where Mrs. Gashleigh found three cigars, which she pocketed, and some letters, over which she cast her eye; and by Fitz's return they had the room as neat as possible, and the best glass and dessert-service mustered on the study table.

It was a very neat and handsome service, as you may be sure Mrs. Gashleigh thought, whose rich uncle had purchased it for the young couple, at Spode and Copeland's; but it was only for twelve persons.

It was agreed that it would be, in all respects, cheaper and better to purchase a dozen more dessert-plates; and with "my silver basket in the centre," Mrs. G. said (she is always bragging about that confounded bread-basket), "we need not have any extra china dishes, and the table will look very pretty."

On making a roll-call of the glass, it was calculated that at least a

dozen or so tumblers, four or five dozen wines, eight water-bottles, and a proper quantity of ice-plates, were requisite; and that, as they would always be useful, it would be best to purchase the articles immediately. Fitz tumbled over the basket containing them, which stood in the hall, as he came in from chambers, and over the boy who had brought them—and the little bill.

The women had had a long debate, and something like a quarrel, it must be owned, over the bill of fare. Mrs. Gashleigh, who had lived a great part of her life in Devonshire, and kept house in great state there, was famous for making some dishes, without which, she thought, no dinner could be perfect. When she proposed her mock-turtle, and stewed pigeons, and gooseberry-cream, Rosa turned up her nose—a pretty little nose it was, by the way, and with a natural turn in that direction.

"Mock-turtle in June, mamma!" said she.

"It was good enough for your grandfather, Rosa," the mamma replied: "it was good enough for the Lord High Admiral, when he was at Plymouth; it was good enough for the first men in the county, and relished by Lord Fortyskewer and Lord Rolls; Sir Lawrence Porker ate twice of it after Exeter Races; and I think it might be good enough for ——"

"I will *not* have it, mamma!" said Rosa, with a stamp of her foot; and Mrs. Gashleigh knew what resolution there was in that. Once, when she had tried to physic the baby, there had been a similar fight between them.

So Mrs. Gashleigh made out a *carte*, in which the soup was left with a dash—a melancholy vacuum; and in which the pigeons were certainly thrust in amongst the *entrées;* but Rosa determined they never should make an *entrée* at all into *her* dinner-party, but that she would have the dinner her own way.

When Fitz returned, then, and after he had paid the little bill of 6*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* for the glass, Rosa flew to him with her sweetest smiles, and the baby in her arms. And after she had made him remark how the child grew every day more and more like him, and after she had treated him to a number of compliments and caresses, which it were positively fulsome to exhibit in public, and after she had soothed him into good humour by her artless tenderness, she began to speak to him about some little points which she had at heart.

She pointed out with a sigh how shabby the old curtains looked

since the dear new glasses which her darling Fitz had given her had been put up in the drawing-room. Muslin curtains cost nothing, and she must and would have them.

The muslin curtains were accorded. She and Fitz went and bought them at Shoolbred's, when you may be sure she treated herself likewise to a neat, sweet pretty half-mourning (for the Court, you know, is in mourning)—a neat sweet barège, or calimanco, or bombazine, or tiffany, or some such thing; but Madame Camille, of Regent Street, made it up, and Rosa looked like an angel in it on the night of her little dinner.

"And, my sweet," she continued, after the curtains had been accorded, "mamma and I have been talking about the dinner. She wants to make it very expensive, which I cannot allow. I have been thinking of a delightful and economical plan, and you, my sweetest Fitz, must put it into execution."

"I have cooked a mutton-chop when I was in chambers," Fitz said with a laugh. "Am I to put on a cap and an apron?"

"No: but you are to go to the 'Megatherium Club' (where, you wretch, you are always going without my leave), and you are to beg Monsieur Mirobolant, your famous cook, to send you one of his best aides-de-camp, as I know he will, and with his aid we can dress the dinner and the confectionery at home for *almost nothing*, and we can show those purse-proud Topham Sawyers and Rowdys that the *humble cottage* can furnish forth an elegant entertainment as well as the gilded halls of wealth."

Fitz agreed to speak to Monsieur Mirobolant. If Rosa had had a fancy for the cook of the Prime Minister, I believe the deluded creature of a husband would have asked Lord John for the loan of him.

IV.

ITZROY TIMMINS, whose taste for wine is remarkable for so young a man, is a member of the committee of the "Megatherium Club," and the great Mirobolant, good-natured as all great men are, was only too happy to oblige him. A young friend and *protégé* of his, of considerable merit, M. Cavalcadour, happened to be disengaged through the lamented death of Lord Hauncher, with whom young Cavalcadour had made his *début* as an artist. He had nothing to refuse to his master, Mirobolant, and would impress himself to be useful to a *gourmet* so distinguished as Monsieur Timmins. Fitz went away as pleased as Punch with this encomium of the great Mirobolant, and was one of those who voted against the decreasing of Mirobolant's salary, when the measure was proposed by Mr. Parings, Colonel Close, and the Screw party in the committee of the club.

Faithful to the promise of his great master, the youthful Cavalcadour called in Lilliput Street the next day. A rich crimson velvet waistcoat, with buttons of blue glass and gold, a variegated blue satin stock, over which a graceful mosaic chain hung in glittering folds, a white hat worn on one side of his long curling ringlets, redolent with the most delightful hair-oil—one of those white hats which looks as if it had been just skinned—and a pair of gloves not exactly of the colour of *beurre frais*, but of *beurre* that has been up the chimney, with a natty cane with a gilt knob, completed the upper part, at any rate, of the costume of the young fellow whom the page introduced to Mrs. Timmins.

Her mamma and she had been just having a dispute about the gooseberry-cream when Cavalcadour arrived. His presence silenced Mrs. Gashleigh; and Rosa, in carrying on a conversation with him

in the French language—which she had acquired perfectly in an elegant finishing establishment in Kensington Square—had a great advantage over her mother, who could only pursue the dialogue with very much difficulty, eyeing one or other interlocutor with an alarmed and suspicious look, and gasping out "We" whenever she thought a proper opportunity arose for the use of that affirmative.

"I have two leetl menus weez me," said Cavalcadour to Mrs. Gashleigh.

"Minews—yes,—oh, indeed?" answered the lady.

"Two little cartes."

"Oh, two carts! Oh, we," she said. "Coming, I suppose?" And she looked out of the window to see if they were there.

Cavalcadour smiled. He produced from a pocket-book a pink paper and a blue paper, on which he had written two bills of fare—the last two which he had composed for the lamented Hauncher—and he handed these over to Mrs. Fitzroy.

The poor little woman was dreadfully puzzled with these documents, (she has them in her possession still,) and began to read from the pink one as follows:—

"DÎNER POUR 16 PERSONNES.

Potage (clair) à la Rigodon.
Do. à la Prince de Tombuctou.

Deux Poissons.

Saumon de Severne à la Boadicée. — Rougets Gratinés à la Cléopatre.

Deux Relevés.
Le Chapeau-à-trois-cornes farci à la Robespierre.
Le Tire-botte à l'Odalisque.

Six Entrées.
Sauté de Hannetons à l'Epinglière.
Côtelettes à la Megatherium.
Bourrasque de Veau à la Palsambleu.
Laitances de Carpe en goguette à la Reine Pomare.
Turban de Volaille à l'Archevêque de Cantorbéry."

And so on with the *entremets*, and *hors d'œuvres*, and the *rôtis*, and the *relevés*.

"Madame will see that the dinners are quite simple," said M. Cavalcadour.

"Oh, quite!" said Rosa, dreadfully puzzled.

"Which would Madame like?"

"Which would we like, mamma?" Rosa asked; adding, as if after a little thought, "I think, sir, we should prefer the blue one." At which Mrs. Gashleigh nodded as knowingly as she could; though pink or blue, I defy anybody to know what these cooks mean by their jargon.

"If you please, Madame, we will go down below and examine the scene of operations," Monsieur Cavalcadour said; and so he was marshalled down the stairs to the kitchen, which he didn't like to name, and appeared before the cook in all his splendour.

He cast a rapid glance round the premises, and a smile of something like contempt lighted up his features. "Will you bring pen and ink, if you please, and I will write down a few of the articles which will be necessary for us? We shall require, if you please, eight more stew-pans, a couple of braising-pans, eight sauté-pans, six bain-marie-pans, a freezing-pot with accessories, and a few more articles of which I will inscribe the names." And Mr. Cavalcadour did so, dashing down, with the rapidity of genius, a tremendous list of ironmongery goods, which he handed over to Mrs. Timmins. She and her mamma were quite frightened by the awful catalogue.

"I will call three days hence and superintend the progress of matters; and we will make the stock for the soup the day before the dinner."

"Don't you think, sir," here interposed Mrs. Gashleigh, "that one soup—a fine rich mock-turtle, such as I have seen in the best houses in the West of England, and such as the late Lord Fortyskewer——"

"You will get what is wanted for the soups, if you please," Mr. Cavalcadour continued, not heeding this interruption, and as bold as a captain on his own quarter-deck: "for the stock of clear soup, you will get a leg of beef, a leg of veal, and a ham."

"We, munseer," said the cook, dropping a terrified curtsey: "a leg of beef, a leg of veal, and a ham."

"You can't serve a leg of veal at a party," said Mrs. Gashleigh; "and a leg of beef is not a company dish."

"Madame, they are to make the stock of the clear soup," Mr. Cavalcadour said.

"*What!*" cried Mrs. Gashleigh; and the cook repeated his former expression.

"Never, whilst *I* am in this house," cried out Mrs. Gashleigh, indignantly; "never in a Christian *English* household; never shall such sinful waste be permitted by *me*. If you wish me to dine, Rosa, you must get a dinner less *expensive*. The Right Honourable Lord Fortyskewer could dine, sir, without these wicked luxuries, and I presume my daughter's guests can."

"Madame is perfectly at liberty to decide," said M. Cavalcadour. "I came to oblige Madame and my good friend Mirobolant, not myself."

"Thank you, sir, I think it *will* be too expensive," Rosa stammered in a great flutter; "but I am very much obliged to you."

"Il n'y a point d'obligation, Madame," said Monsieur Alcide Camille Cavalcadour in his most superb manner; and, making a splendid bow to the lady of the house, was respectfully conducted to the upper regions by little Buttons, leaving Rosa frightened, the cook amazed and silent, and Mrs. Gashleigh boiling with indignation against the dresser.

Up to that moment, Mrs. Blowser, the cook, who had come out of Devonshire with Mrs. Gashleigh (of course that lady garrisoned her daughter's house with servants, and expected them to give her information of everything which took place there)—up to that moment, I say, the cook had been quite contented with that subterraneous station which she occupied in life, and had a pride in keeping her kitchen neat, bright, and clean. It was, in her opinion, the comfortablest room in the house (we all thought so when we came down of a night to smoke there), and the handsomest kitchen in Lilliput Street.

But after the visit of Cavalcadour, the cook became quite discontented and uneasy in her mind. She talked in a melancholy manner over the area-railings to the cooks at twenty-three and twenty-five. She stepped over the way, and conferred with the cook there. She made inquiries at the baker's and at other places about the kitchens in the great houses in Brobdingnag Gardens, and how many spits, bangmarry-pans, and stoo-pans they had. She thought she could not do with an occasional help, but must have a kitchen-maid. And she was often discovered by a gentleman of the police force, who was, I believe, her cousin, and occasionally visited her when Mrs. Gashleigh was not in the house or spying it:—she was discovered seated with *Mrs. Rundell* in her lap, its leaves bespattered with her

tears. "My pease be gone, Pelisse," she said, "zins I zaw that ther Franchman!" And it was all the faithful fellow could do to console her.

"—— the dinner!" said Timmins, in a rage at last. "Having it cooked in the house is out of the question. The bother of it, and the row your mother makes, are enough to drive one mad. It won't happen again, I can promise you, Rosa. Order it at Fubsby's, at once. You can have everything from Fubsby's—from footmen to saltspoons. Let's go and order it at Fubsby's."

"Darling, if you don't mind the expense, and it will be any relief to you, let us do as you wish," Rosa said; and she put on her bonnet, and they went off to the grand cook and confectioner of the Brobdingnag quarter.

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## V.

ON the arm of her Fitzroy, Rosa went off to Fubsby's, that magnificent shop at the corner of Parliament Place and Alicompayne Square,—a shop into which the rogue had often cast a glance of approbation as he passed: for there are not only the most wonderful and delicious cakes and confections in the window, but at the counter there are almost sure to be three or four of the prettiest women in the whole of this world, with little darling caps of the last French make, with beautiful wavy hair, and the neatest possible waists and aprons.

Yes, there they sit; and others, perhaps, besides Fitz have cast a sheep's-eye through those enormous plate-glass window-panes. I suppose it is the fact of perpetually living among such a quantity of good things that makes those young ladies so beautiful. They come into the place, let us say, like ordinary people, and gradually grow handsomer and handsomer, until they grow out into the perfect angels you see. It can't be otherwise: if you and I, my dear fellow, were to have a course of that place, we should become beautiful too. They live in an atmosphere of the most delicious pine-apples, blancmanges, creams, (some whipt, and some so good that of course they don't want whipping,) jellies, tipsy-cakes, cherry-brandy — one hundred thousand sweet and lovely things. Look at the preserved fruits, look at the golden ginger, the outspreading ananas, the darling

little rogues of China oranges, ranged in the gleaming crystal cylinders. *Mon Dieu!* Look at the strawberries in the leaves. Each of them is as large nearly as a lady's reticule, and looks as if it had been brought up in a nursery to itself. One of those strawberries is a meal for those young ladies behind the counter; they nibble off a little from the side, and if they are very hungry, which can scarcely ever happen, they are allowed to go to the crystal canisters and take out a rout-cake or macaroon. In the evening they sit and tell each other little riddles out of the bonbons; and when they wish to amuse themselves, they read the most delightful remarks, in the French language, about Love, and Cupid, and Beauty, before they place them inside the crackers. They always are writing down good things into Mr. Fubsby's ledgers. It must be a perfect feast to read them. Talk of the Garden of Eden! I believe it was nothing to Mr. Fubsby's house; and I have no doubt that after those young ladies have been there a certain time, they get to such a pitch of loveliness at last, that they become complete angels, with wings sprouting out of their lovely shoulders, when (after giving just a preparatory balance or two) they fly up to the counter and perch there for a minute, hop down again, and affectionately kiss the other young ladies, and say, "Good-by, dears! We shall meet again *là haut.*" And then with a whirr of their deliciously scented wings, away they fly for good, whisking over the trees of Brobdingnag Square, and up into the sky, as the policeman touches his hat.

It is up there that they invent the legends for the crackers, and the wonderful riddles and remarks on the bonbons. No mortal, I am sure, could write them.

I never saw a man in such a state as Fitzroy Timmins in the presence of those ravishing houris. Mrs. Fitz having explained that they required a dinner for twenty persons, the chief young lady asked what Mr. and Mrs. Fitz would like, and named a thousand things, each better than the other, to all of which Fitz instantly said yes. The wretch was in such a state of infatuation that I believe if that lady had proposed to him a fricasseed elephant, or a boa-constrictor in jelly, he would have said, "O yes, certainly; put it down."

That Peri wrote down in her album a list of things which it would make your mouth water to listen to. But she took it all quite calmly. Heaven bless you! *they* don't care about things that are no delicacies to them! But whatever she chose to write down, Fitzroy let her.

After the dinner and dessert were ordered (at Fubsby's they furnish everything: dinner and dessert, plate and china, servants in your own livery, and, if you please, guests of title too), the married couple retreated from that shop of wonders; Rosa delighted that the trouble of the dinner was all off their hands: but she was afraid it would be rather expensive.

"Nothing can be too expensive which pleases *you*, dear," Fitz said.

"By the way, one of those young women was rather good-looking," Rosa remarked: "the one in the cap with the blue ribbons." (And she cast about the shape of the cap in her mind, and determined to have exactly such another.)

"Think so? I didn't observe," said the miserable hypocrite by her side; and when he had seen Rosa home, he went back, like an infamous fiend, to order something else which he had forgotten, he said, at Fubsby's. Get out of that Paradise, you cowardly, creeping, vile serpent you!

Until the day of the dinner, the infatuated fop was *always* going to Fubsby's. *He was remarked there.* He used to go before he went to chambers in the morning, and sometimes on his return from the Temple: but the morning was the time which he preferred; and one day, when he went on one of his eternal pretexts, and was chattering and flirting at the counter, a lady who had been reading yesterday's paper and eating a halfpenny bun for an hour in the back shop (if that paradise may be called a shop)—a lady stepped forward, laid down the *Morning Herald*, and confronted him.

That lady was Mrs. Gashleigh. From that day the miserable Fitzroy was in her power; and she resumed a sway over his house, to shake off which had been the object of his life, and the result of many battles. And for a mere freak—(for, on going into Fubsby's a week afterwards he found the Peris drinking tea out of blue cups, and eating stale bread and butter, when his absurd passion instantly vanished)—I say, for a mere freak, the most intolerable burden of his life was put on his shoulders again—his mother-in-law.

On the day before the little dinner took place—and I promise you we shall come to it in the very next chapter—a tall and elegant middle-aged gentleman, who might have passed for an earl but that there was a slight incompleteness about his hands and feet, the former being uncommonly red, and the latter large and irregular, was

introduced to Mrs. Timmins by the page, who announced him as Mr. Truncheon.

"I'm Truncheon, Ma'am," he said, with a low bow.

"Indeed!" said Rosa.

"About the dinner, M'm, from Fubsby's, M'm. As you have no butler, M'm, I presume you will wish me to act as sich. I shall bring two persons as haids to-morrow; both answers to the name of John. I'd best, if you please, inspect the premisis, and will think you to allow your young man to show me the pantry and kitching."

Truncheon spoke in a low voice, and with the deepest and most respectful melancholy. There is not much expression in his eyes, but from what there is, you would fancy that he was oppressed by a secret sorrow. Rosa trembled as she surveyed this gentleman's size, his splendid appearance, and gravity. "I am sure," she said, "I never shall dare to ask him to hand a glass of water." Even Mrs. Gashleigh, when she came on the morning of the actual dinner-party, to superintend matters, was cowed, and retreated from the kitchen before the calm majesty of Truncheon.

And yet that great man was, like all the truly great—affable.

He put aside his coat and waistcoat (both of evening cut, and looking prematurely splendid as he walked the streets in noon-day), and did not disdain to rub the glasses and polish the decanters, and to show young Buttons the proper mode of preparing these articles for a dinner. And while he operated, the maids, and Buttons, and cook, when she could—and what had she but the vegetables to boil?—crowded round him, and listened with wonder as he talked of the great families as he had lived with. That man, as they saw him there before them, had been cab-boy to Lord Tantallan, valet to the Earl of Bareacres, and groom of the chambers to the Duchess Dowager of Fitzbattleaxe. Oh, it was delightful to hear Mr. Truncheon!

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VI.

N the great, momentous, stupendous day of the dinner, my beloved female reader may imagine that Fitzroy Timmins was sent about his business at an early hour in the morning, while the women began to make preparations to receive their guests. "There will be no need of your going to Fubsby's," Mrs. Gashleigh said to him, with a look that drove him out of doors. "Everything that we require has been ordered *there!* You will please to be back here at six o'clock, and not sooner: and I presume you will acquiesce in my arrangements about the *wine!*"

"O yes, mamma," said the prostrate son-in-law.

"In so large a party—a party beyond some folks' *means*—expensive *vines* are *absurd*. The light sherry at 26*s*., the champagne at 42*s*.; nd you are not to go beyond 36*s*. for the claret and port after dinner. Mind, coffee will be served; and you come upstairs after two rounds f the claret."

"Of course, of course," acquiesced the wretch; and hurried out f the house to his chambers, and to discharge the commissions with hich the womankind had intrusted him.

As for Mrs. Gashleigh, you might have heard her bawling over the ouse the whole day long. That admirable woman was everywhere: n the kitchen until the arrival of Truncheon, before whom she would ot retreat without a battle; on the stairs; in Fitzroy's dressing-room; nd in Fitzroy minor's nursery, to whom she gave a dose of her own omposition, while the nurse was sent out on a pretext to make urchases of garnish for the dishes to be served for the little dinner. Garnish for the dishes! As if the folks at Fubsby's could not garnish lishes better than Gashleigh, with her stupid old-world devices of aurel-leaves, parsley, and cut turnips! Why, there was not a dish erved that day that was not covered over with skewers, on which ruffles, crayfish, mushrooms, and forced-meat were impaled. When ld Gashleigh went down with her barbarian bunches of holly and reens to stick about the meats, even the cook saw their incongruity, nd, at Truncheon's orders, flung the whole shrubbery into the dust-ouse, where, while poking about the premises, you may be sure Mrs. G. saw it.

Every candle which was to be burned that night (including the allow candle, which she said was a good enough bed-light for Fitzroy) he stuck into the candlesticks with her own hands, giving her own igh-shouldered plated candlesticks of the year 1798 the place of onour. She upset all poor Rosa's floral arrangements, turning the osegays from one vase into the other without any pity, and was never ired of beating, and pushing, and patting, and *whapping* the curtain nd sofa draperies into shape in the little drawing-room.

In Fitz's own apartments she revelled with peculiar pleasure. It as been described how she had sacked his study and pushed away is papers, some of which, including three cigars, and the commence-nent of an article for the *Law Magazine*, "Lives of the Sheriffs' Officers," he has never been able to find to this day. Mamma now vent into the little room in the back regions, which is Fitz's dressing-

room, (and was destined to be a cloak-room,) and here she rummaged to her heart's delight.

In an incredibly short space of time she examined all his outlying pockets, drawers, and letters; she inspected his socks and handkerchiefs in the top drawers; and on the dressing-table, his razors, shaving-strop, and hair-oil. She carried off his silver-topped scent-bottle out of his dressing-case, and a half-dozen of his favourite pills (which Fitz possesses in common with every well-regulated man), and probably administered them to her own family. His boots, glossy pumps, and slippers, she pushed into the shower-bath, where the poor fellow stepped into them the next morning, in the midst of a pool in which they were lying. The baby was found sucking his boot-hooks the next day in the nursery; and as for the bottle of varnish for his shoes, (which he generally paints upon the trees himself, having a pretty taste in that way,) it could never be found to the present hour; but it was remarked that the young Master Gashleighs, when they came home for the holidays, always wore lacquered highlows; and the reader may draw his conclusions from *that* fact.

In the course of the day all the servants gave Mrs. Timmins warning.

The cook said she coodn't abear it no longer, 'aving Mrs. G. always about her kitching, with her fingers in all the saucepans. Mrs. G. had got her the place, but she preferred one as Mrs. G. didn't get for her.

The nurse said she was come to nuss Master Fitzroy, and knew her duty; his grandmamma wasn't his nuss, and was always aggrawating her,—missus must shoot herself elsewhere.

The housemaid gave utterance to the same sentiments in language more violent.

Little Buttons bounced up to his mistress, said he was butler of the family, Mrs. G. was always poking about his pantry, and dam if he'd stand it.

At every moment Rosa grew more and more bewildered. The baby howled a great deal during the day. His large china christening-bowl was cracked by Mrs. Gashleigh altering the flowers in it, and pretending to be very cool, whilst her hands shook with rage.

"Pray go on, mamma," Rosa said with tears in her eyes. "Should you like to break the chandelier?"

"Ungrateful, unnatural child!" bellowed the other. "Only that know you couldn't do without me, I'd leave the house this minute."

"As you wish," said Rosa; but Mrs. G. *didn't* wish: and in this ıncture Truncheon arrived.

That officer surveyed the dining-room, laid the cloth there with dmirable precision and neatness; ranged the plate on the sideboard ʼith graceful accuracy, but objected to that old thing in the centre, s he called Mrs. Gashleigh's silver basket, as cumbrous and useless or the table, where they would want all the room they could get.

Order was not restored to the house, nor, indeed, any decent ›rogress made, until this great man came: but where there was a evolt before, and a general disposition to strike work and to yell out lefiance against Mrs. Gashleigh, who was sitting bewildered and urious in the drawing-room—where there was before commotion, at he appearance of the master-spirit, all was peace and unanimity: the :ook went back to her pans, the housemaid busied herself with the :hina and glass, cleaning some articles and breaking others, Buttons prang up and down the stairs, obedient to the orders of his chief, and .ll things went well and in their season.

At six, the man with the wine came from Binney and Latham's. \t a quarter-past six, Timmins himself arrived.

At half-past six, he might have been heard shouting out for his ʻarnished boots—but we know where *those* had been hidden—and or his dressing things; but Mrs. Gashleigh had put them away.

As in his vain inquiries for these articles he stood shouting, 'Nurse! Buttons! Rosa my dear!" and the most fearful execrations ıp and down the stairs, Mr. Truncheon came out on him.

"Igscuse me, sir," says he, "but it's impawsable. We can't dine :wenty at that table—not if you set 'em out awinder, we can't."

"What's to be done?" asked Fitzroy, in an agony; "they've all ;aid they'd come."

"Can't do it," said the other; "with two top and bottom—and ʃour table is as narrow as a bench—we can't hold more than heighteen, ınd then each person's helbows will be into his neighbour's cheer."

"Rosa! Mrs. Gashleigh!" cried out Timmins, "come down and ʃpeak to this gentl——this——"

"Truncheon, sir," said the man.

The women descended from the drawing-room. "Look and see, ladies," he said, inducting them into the dining-room: "there's the

room, there's the table laid for heighteen, and I defy you to squeege in more."

"One person in a party always fails," said Mrs. Gashleigh, getting alarmed.

"That's nineteen," Mr. Truncheon remarked. "We must knock another hoff, Ma'm." And he looked her hard in the face.

Mrs. Gashleigh was very red and nervous, and paced, or rather squeezed round the table (it was as much as she could do). The chairs could not be put any closer than they were. It was impossible, unless the *convive* sat as a centre-piece in the middle, to put another guest at that table.

"Look at that lady movin' round, sir. You see now the difficklty. If my men wasn't thinner, they couldn't hoperate at all," Mr. Truncheon observed, who seemed to have a spite to Mrs. Gashleigh.

"What is to be done?" she said, with purple accents.

"My dearest mamma," Rosa cried out, "you must stop at home —how sorry I am!" And she shot one glance at Fitzroy, who shot another at the great Truncheon, who held down his eyes. "We could manage with heighteen," he said, mildly.

Mrs. Gashleigh gave a hideous laugh.

* * * * *

She went away. At eight o'clock she was pacing at the corner of the street, and actually saw the company arrive. First came the Topham Sawyers, in their light-blue carriage with the white hammer-cloth and blue and white ribbons—their footmen drove the house down with the knocking.

Then followed the ponderous and snuff-coloured vehicle, with faded gilt wheels and brass earl's coronets all over it, the conveyance of the House of Bungay. The Countess of Bungay and daughter stepped out of the carriage. The fourteenth Earl of Bungay couldn't come.

Sir Thomas and Lady Gulpin's fly made its appearance, from which issued the General with his star, and Lady Gulpin in yellow satin. The Rowdys' brougham followed next; after which Mrs. Butt's handsome equipage drove up.

The two friends of the house, young gentlemen from the Temple, now arrived in cab No. 9996. We tossed up, in fact, which should pay the fare.

Mr. Ranville Ranville walked, and was dusting his boots as the

Templars drove up. Lord Castlemouldy came out of a twopenny omnibus. Funnyman, the wag, came last, whirling up rapidly in a hansom, just as Mrs. Gashleigh, with rage in her heart, was counting that two people had failed, and that there were only seventeen after all.

Mr. Truncheon passed our names to Mr. Billiter, who bawled them out on the stairs. Rosa was smiling in a pink dress, and looking as fresh as an angel, and received her company with that grace which has always characterized her.

The moment of the dinner arrived, old Lady Bungay scuffled off on the arm of Fitzroy, while the rear was brought up by Rosa and Lord Castlemouldy, of Ballyshanvanvoght Castle, co. Tipperary. Some fellows who had the luck, took down ladies to dinner. I was not sorry to be out of the way of Mrs. Rowdy, with her dandyfied airs, or of that high and mighty county princess, Mrs. Topham Sawyer.

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VII.

OF course it does not become the present writer, who has partaken of the best entertainment which his friends could supply, to make fun of their (somewhat ostentatious, as it must be confessed) hospitality. If they gave a dinner beyond their means, it is no business of mine. I hate a man who goes and eats a friend's meat, and then blabs the secrets of the mahogany. Such a man deserves never to be asked to dinner again; and though at the close of a London season that seems no great loss, and you sicken of a whitebait as you would of a whale—yet we must always remember that there's another season coming, and hold our tongues for the present.

As for describing, then, the mere victuals on Timmins's table, that would be absurd. Everybody—(I mean of the genteel world of course, of which I make no doubt the reader is a polite ornament)—Everybody has the same everything in London. You see the same coats, the same dinners, the same boiled fowls and mutton, the same cutlets, fish, and cucumbers, the same lumps of Wenham Lake ice, &c. The waiters with white neckcloths are as like each other everywhere as the pease which they hand round with the ducks of the second course. Can't any one invent anything new?

The only difference between Timmins's dinner and his neighbour's was, that he had hired, as we have said, the greater part of the plate, and that his cowardly conscience magnified faults and disasters of which no one else probably took heed.

But Rosa thought, from the supercilious air with which Mrs. Topham Sawyer was eyeing the plate and other arrangements, that she was remarking the difference of the ciphers on the forks and spoons—(which had, in fact, been borrowed from every one of Fitzroy's friends—I know, for instance, that he had my six, among others, and only returned five, along with a battered old black-pronged plated abomination, which I have no doubt belongs to Mrs. Gashleigh, whom I hereby request to send back mine in exchange)—their guilty consciences, I say, made them fancy that every one was spying out their domestic deficiencies: whereas, it is probable that nobody present thought of their failings at all. People never do: they never see holes in their neighbours' coats—they are too indolent, simple, and charitable.

Some things, however, one could not help remarking: for instance, though Fitz is my closest friend, yet could I avoid seeing and being amused by his perplexity and his dismal efforts to be facetious? His eye wandered all round the little room with quick uneasy glances, very different from those frank and jovial looks with which he is accustomed to welcome you to a leg of mutton; and Rosa, from the other end of the table, and over the flowers, *entrée* dishes, and wine-coolers, telegraphed him with signals of corresponding alarm. Poor devils! why did they ever go beyond that leg of mutton?

Funnyman was not brilliant in conversation, scarcely opening his mouth, except for the purposes of feasting. The fact is, our friend

Tom Dawson was at table, who knew all his stories, and in his presence the greatest wag is always silent and uneasy.

Fitz has a very pretty wit of his own, and a good reputation on circuit; but he is timid before great people. And indeed the presence of that awful Lady Bungay on his right hand was enough to damp him. She was in court mourning (for the late Prince of Schlippenschloppen). She had on a large black funereal turban and appurtenances, and a vast breastplate of twinkling, twiddling black bugles. No wonder a man could not be gay in talking to *her*.

Mrs. Rowdy and Mrs. Topham Sawyer love each other as women do who have the same receiving nights, and ask the same society; they were only separated by Ranville Ranville, who tries to be well with both: and they talked at each other across him.

Topham and Rowdy growled out a conversation about Rum, Ireland, and the Navigation Laws, quite unfit for print. Sawyer never speaks three words without mentioning the House and the Speaker.

The Irish Peer said nothing (which was a comfort); but he ate and drank of everything which came in his way; and cut his usual absurd figure in dyed whiskers and a yellow under-waistcoat.

General Gulpin sported his star, and looked fat and florid, but melancholy. His wife ordered away his dinner, just like honest Sancho's physician at Barataria.

Botherby's stories about Lamartine are as old as the hills, since the barricades of 1848; and he could not get in a word or cut the slightest figure. And as for Tom Dawson, he was carrying on an undertoned small-talk with Lady Barbara St. Mary's, so that there was not much conversation worth record going on *within* the dining-room.

Outside, it was different. Those houses in Lilliput Street are so uncommonly compact, that you can hear everything which takes place all over the tenement; and so—

In the awful pauses of the banquet, and the hall-door being furthermore open, we had the benefit of hearing:

The cook, and the occasional cook, belowstairs, exchanging rapid phrases regarding the dinner;

The smash of the soup-tureen, and swift descent of the kitchen-maid and soup-ladle down the stairs to the lower regions. This accident created a laugh, and rather amused Fitzroy and the company,

and caused Funnyman to say, bowing to Rosa, that she was mistress of herself, though China fall. But she did not heed him, for at that moment another noise commenced, namely, that of—

The baby in the upper rooms, who commenced a series of piercing yells, which, though stopped by the sudden clapping to of the nursery-door, were only more dreadful to the mother when suppressed. She would have given a guinea to go upstairs and have done with the whole entertainment.

A thundering knock came at the door very early after the dessert, and the poor soul took a speedy opportunity of summoning the ladies to depart, though you may be sure it was only old Mrs. Gashleigh, who had come with her daughters—of course the first person to come. I saw her red gown whisking up the stairs, which were covered with plates and dishes, over which she trampled.

Instead of having any quiet after the retreat of the ladies, the house was kept in a rattle, and the glasses jingled on the table as the flymen and coachmen plied the knocker, and the *soirée* came in. From my place I could see everything: the guests as they arrived (I remarked very few carriages, mostly cabs and flies), and a little crowd of blackguard boys and children, who were formed round the door, and gave ironical cheers to the folks as they stepped out of their vehicles.

As for the evening-party, if a crowd in the dog-days is pleasant, poor Mrs. Timmins certainly had a successful *soirée*. You could hardly move on the stair. Mrs. Sternhold broke in the banisters, and nearly fell through. There was such a noise and chatter you could not hear the singing of the Miss Gashleighs, which was no great loss. Lady Bungay could hardly get to her carriage, being entangled with Colonel Wedgewood in the passage. An absurd attempt was made to get up a dance of some kind; but before Mrs. Crowder had got round the room, the hanging-lamp in the dining-room below was stove in, and fell with a crash on the table, now prepared for refreshment.

Why, in fact, did the Timminses give that party at all? It was quite beyond their means. They have offended a score of their old friends, and pleased none of their acquaintances. So angry were many who were not asked, that poor Rosa says she must now give a couple more parties and take in those not previously invited. And I know for a fact that Fubsby's bill is not yet paid; nor Binney

and Latham's the wine-merchants; that the breakage and hire of glass and china cost ever so much money; that every true friend of Timmins has cried out against his absurd extravagance, and that now, when every one is going out of town, Fitz has hardly money to pay his circuit, much more to take Rosa to a watering-place, as he wished and promised.

As for Mrs. Gashleigh, the only feasible plan of economy which she can suggest, is that she should come and live with her daughter and son-in-law, and that they should keep house together. If he agrees to this, she has a little sum at the banker's, with which she would not mind easing his present difficulties; and the poor wretch is so utterly bewildered and crest-fallen that it is very likely he will become her victim.

The Topham Sawyers, when they go down into the country, will represent Fitz as a ruined man and reckless prodigal; his uncle, the attorney, from whom he has expectations, will most likely withdraw his business, and adopt some other member of his family—Blanche Crowder for instance, whose husband, the doctor, has had high words with poor Fitzroy already, of course at the women's instigation. And all these accumulated miseries fall upon the unfortunate wretch because he was good-natured, and his wife would have a Little Dinner.

# THE FATAL BOOTS.

## JANUARY.—THE BIRTH OF THE YEAR.

SOME poet has observed, that if any man would write down what has really happened to him in this mortal life, he would be sure to make a good book, though he never had met with a single adventure from his birth to his burial. How much more, then, must I, who *have* had adventures, most singular, pathetic, and unparalleled, be able to compile an instructive and entertaining volume for the use of the public.

I don't mean to say that I have killed lions, or seen the wonders of travel in the deserts of Arabia or Prussia; or that I have been a very fashionable character, living with dukes and peeresses, and writing my recollections of them, as the way now is. I never left this my native isle, nor spoke to a lord (except an Irish one, who had rooms in our house, and forgot to pay three weeks' lodging and extras); but, as our immortal bard observes, I have in the course of my existence been so eaten up by the slugs and harrows of outrageous fortune, and have been the object of such continual and extraordinary ill-luck, that I believe it would melt the heart of a milestone to read of it—that is, if a milestone had a heart of anything but stone.

Twelve of my adventures, suitable for meditation and perusal during the twelve months of the year, have been arranged by me for this work. They contain a part of the history of a great, and, confidently I may say, a *good* man. I was not a spendthrift like other men. I never wronged any man of a shilling, though I am as sharp a fellow at a bargain as any in Europe. I never injured a fellow-creature; on the contrary, on several occasions, when injured

myself, have shown the most wonderful forbearance. I come of a tolerably good family; and yet, born to wealth—of an inoffensive disposition, careful of the money that I had, and eager to get more, —I have been going down hill ever since my journey of life began, and have been pursued by a complication of misfortunes such as surely never happened to any man but the unhappy Bob Stubbs.

Bob Stubbs is my name; and I haven't got a shilling: I have borne the commission of lieutenant in the service of King George, and am *now*—but never mind what I am now, for the public will know in a few pages more. My father was of the Suffolk Stubbses—a well-to-do gentleman of Bungay. My grandfather had been a respected attorney in that town, and left my papa a pretty little fortune. I was thus the inheritor of competence, and ought to be at this moment a gentleman.

My misfortunes may be said to have commenced about a year before my birth, when my papa, a young fellow pretending to study the law in London, fell madly in love with Miss Smith, the daughter of a tradesman, who did not give her a sixpence, and afterwards became bankrupt. My papa married this Miss Smith, and carried her off to the country, where I was born, in an evil hour for me.

Were I to attempt to describe my early years, you would laugh at me as an impostor; but the following letter from mamma to a friend, after her marriage, will pretty well show you what a poor foolish creature she was; and what a reckless extravagant fellow was my other unfortunate parent:—

"TO MISS ELIZA KICKS, IN GRACECHURCH STREET, LONDON.

"Oh, ELIZA! your Susan is the happiest girl under heaven! My Thomas is an angel! not a tall grenadier-like looking fellow, such as I always vowed I would marry:—on the contrary, he is what the world would call dumpy, and I hesitate not to confess, that his eyes have a cast in them. But what then? when one of his eyes is fixed on me, and one on my babe, they are lighted up with an affection which my pen cannot describe, and which, certainly, was never bestowed upon any woman so strongly as upon your happy Susan Stubbs.

"When he comes home from shooting, or the farm, if you *could* see dear Thomas with me and our dear little Bob! as I sit on one knee,

and baby on the other, and as he dances us both about. I often wish that we had Sir Joshua, or some great painter, to depict the group; for sure it is the prettiest picture in the whole world, to see three such loving merry people.

"Dear baby is the most lovely little creature that *can possibly be*,—the very *image* of papa; he is cutting his teeth, and the delight of *everybody*. Nurse says that, when he is older, he will get rid of his squint, and his hair will get a *great deal* less red. Doctor Bates is as kind, and skilful, and attentive as we could desire. Think what a blessing to have had him! Ever since poor baby's birth, it has never had a day of quiet; and he has been obliged to give it from three to four doses every week;—how thankful ought we to be that the *dear thing* is as well as it is! It got through the measles wonderfully; then it had a little rash; and then a nasty hooping-cough; and then a fever, and continual pains in its poor little stomach, crying, poor dear child, from morning till night.

"But dear Tom is an excellent nurse; and many and many a night has he had no sleep, dear man! in consequence of the poor little baby. He walks up and down with it *for hours*, singing a kind of song (dear fellow, he has no more voice than a tea-kettle), and bobbing his head backwards and forwards, and looking, in his night-cap and dressing-gown, *so droll*. Oh, Eliza! how you would laugh to see him.

"We have one of the best nursemaids *in the world*,—an Irishwoman, who is as fond of baby almost as his mother (but that can *never be*). She takes it to walk in the park for hours together, and I really don't know why Thomas dislikes her. He says she is tipsy, very often, and slovenly, which I cannot conceive;—to be sure, the nurse is sadly dirty, and sometimes smells very strong of gin.

"But what of that?—these little drawbacks only make home more pleasant. When one thinks how many mothers have *no* nursemaids: how many poor dear children have no doctors: ought we not to be thankful for Mary Malowney, and that Dr. Bates's bill is forty-seven pounds? How ill must dear baby have been, to require so much physic!

"But they are a sad expense, these dear babies, after all. Fancy, Eliza, how much this Mary Malowney costs us. Ten shillings every week; a glass of brandy or gin at dinner; three pint-bottles of Mr. Thrale's best porter every day,—making twenty-one in a week,

nd nine hundred and ninety in the eleven months she has been with s. Then, for baby, there is Dr. Bates's bill of forty-five guineas, two uineas for christening, twenty for a grand christening supper and ball ·ich uncle John mortally offended because he was made godfather, and ad to give baby a silver cup: he has struck Thomas out of his will: nd old Mr. Firkin quite as much hurt because he was *not* asked: he ·ill not speak to me or Thomas in consequence); twenty guineas for annels, laces, little gowns, caps, napkins, and such baby's ware: and ll this out of 300*l.* a year! But Thomas expects to make *a great deal* y his farm.

"We have got the most charming country-house *you can imagine:* t is *quite shut in* by trees, and so retired that, though only thirty niles from London, the post comes to us but once a week. The oads, it must be confessed, are execrable; it is winter now, and ve are up to our knees in mud and snow. But oh, Eliza! how iappy we are: with Thomas (he has had a sad attack of heumatism, dear man!) and little Bobby, and our kind friend Dr. Bates, who comes so far to see us, I leave you to fancy that we iave a charming merry party, and do not care for all the gaieties of Ranelagh.

"Adieu! dear baby is crying for his mamma. A thousand kisses rom your affectionate

"SUSAN STUBBS."

There it is! Doctor's bills, gentleman-farming, twenty-one pints of porter a week. In this way my unnatural parents were already ·obbing me of my property.

## FEBRUARY.—CUTTING WEATHER.

I HAVE called this chapter "cutting weather," partly in compliment to the month of February, and partly in respect of my own misortunes, which you are going to read about. For I have often thought hat January (which is mostly twelfth-cake and holiday time) is like he first four or five years of a little boy's life; then comes dismal February, and the working-days with it, when chaps begin to look

out for themselves, after the Christmas and the New Year's heyday and merry-making are over, which our infancy may well be said to be. Well can I recollect that bitter first of February, when I first launched out into the world and appeared at Doctor Swishtail's academy.

I began at school that life of prudence and economy which I have carried on ever since. My mother gave me eighteenpence on setting out (poor soul! I thought her heart would break as she kissed me, and bade God bless me); and, besides, I had a small capital of my own, which I had amassed for a year previous. I'll tell you what I used to do. Wherever I saw six halfpence I took one. If it was asked for, I said I had taken it, and gave it back;—if it was not missed, I said nothing about it, as why should I?—those who don't miss their money, don't lose their money. So I had a little private fortune of three shillings, besides mother's eighteenpence. At school they called me the copper-merchant, I had such lots of it.

Now, even at a preparatory school, a well-regulated boy may better himself: and I can tell you I did. I never was in any quarrels: I never was very high in the class or very low; but there was no chap so much respected:—and why? *I'd always money.* The other boys spent all theirs in the first day or two, and they gave me plenty of cakes and barley-sugar then, I can tell you. I'd no need to spend my own money, for they would insist upon treating me. Well, in a week, when theirs was gone, and they had but their threepence a week to look to for the rest of the half-year, what did I do? Why, I am proud to say that three-halfpence out of the threepence a week of almost all the young gentlemen at Dr. Swishtail's, came into my pocket. Suppose, for instance, Tom Hicks wanted a slice of gingerbread, who had the money? Little Bob Stubbs, to be sure. "Hicks," I used to say, "*I'll* buy you three halfp'orth of gingerbread, if you'll give me threepence next Saturday." And he agreed; and next Saturday came, and he very often could not pay me more than three-halfpence. Then there was the threepence I was to have *the next* Saturday. I'll tell you what I did for a whole half-year:—I lent a chap, by the name of Dick Bunting, three-halfpence the first Saturday for threepence the next: he could not pay me more than half when Saturday came, and I'm blest if I did not make him pay me three-halfpence *for three-and-twenty weeks running*, making two shillings and tenpence-halfpenny. But he was a sad dis-

honourable fellow, Dick Bunting; for, after I'd been so kind to him, and let him off for three-and-twenty-weeks the money he owed me, holidays came, and threepence he owed me still. Well, according to the common principles of practice, after six weeks' holidays, he ought to have paid me exactly sixteen shillings, which was my due. For the

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| First week the 3*d.* would be | 6*d.* | Fourth week . . . . . | 4*s.* |
| Second week . . . . . | 1*s.* | Fifth week . . . . . | 8*s.* |
| Third week . . . . . | 2*s.* | Sixth week . . . . . | 16*s.* |

Nothing could be more just; and yet—will it be believed?—when Bunting came back he offered me *three-halfpence!* the mean, dishonest scoundrel.

However, I was even with him, I can tell you.—He spent all his money in a fortnight, and *then* I screwed him down! I made him, besides giving me a penny for a penny, pay me a quarter of his bread-and-butter at breakfast and a quarter of his cheese at supper; and before the half-year was out, I got from him a silver fruit-knife, a box of compasses, and a very pretty silver-laced waistcoat, in which I went home as proud as a king: and, what's more, I had no less than three golden guineas in the pocket of it, besides fifteen shillings, the knife, and a brass bottle-screw, which I got from another chap. It wasn't bad interest for twelve shillings—which was all the money I'd had in the year—was it? Heigho! I've often wished that I could get such a chance again in this wicked world; but men are more avaricious now than they used to be in those dear early days.

Well, I went home in my new waistcoat as fine as a peacock; and when I gave the bottle-screw to my father, begging him to take it as a token of my affection for him, my dear mother burst into such a fit of tears as I never saw, and kissed and hugged me fit to smother me. "Bless him, bless him," says she, "to think of his old father. And where did you purchase it, Bob?"—"Why, mother," says I, "I purchased it out of my savings" (which was as true as the gospel).—When I said this, mother looked round to father, smiling, although she had tears in her eyes, and she took his hand, and with her other hand drew me to her. "Is he not a noble boy?" says she to my father: "and only nine years old!"—"Faith," says my father, "he *is* a good lad, Susan. Thank thee, my boy: and here is a crown-piece in return for thy bottle-screw:—it shall open us a bottle of the very best too," says my father. And he kept his word. I always was

fond of good wine (though never, from a motive of proper self-denial, having any in my cellar); and, by Jupiter! on this night I had my little skinful,—for there was no stinting,—so pleased were my dear parents with the bottle-screw. The best of it was, it only cost me threepence originally, which a chap could not pay me.

Seeing this game was such a good one, I became very generous towards my parents; and a capital way it is to encourage liberality in children. I gave mamma a very neat brass thimble, and she gave me a half-guinea piece. Then I gave her a very pretty needle-book, which I made myself with an ace of spades from a new pack of cards we had, and I got Sally, our maid, to cover it with a bit of pink satin her mistress had given her; and I made the leaves of the book, which I vandyked very nicely, out of a piece of flannel I had had round my neck for a sore throat. It smelt a little of hartshorn, but it was a beautiful needle-book; and mamma was so delighted with it, that she went into town and bought me a gold-laced hat. Then I bought papa a pretty china tobacco-stopper: but I am sorry to say of my dear father that he was not so generous as my mamma or myself, for he only burst out laughing, and did not give me so much as a half-crown piece, which was the least I expected from him. "I shan't give you anything, Bob, this time," says he; "and I wish, my boy, you would not make any more such presents,—for, really, they are too expensive." Expensive indeed! I hate meanness,—even in a father.

I must tell you about the silver-edged waistcoat which Bunting gave me. Mamma asked me about it, and I told her the truth,—that it was a present from one of the boys for my kindness to him. Well, what does she do but writes back to Dr. Swishtail, when I went to school, thanking him for his attention to her dear son, and sending a shilling to the good and grateful little boy who had given me the waistcoat!

"What waistcoat is it," says the Doctor to me, "and who gave it to you?"

"Bunting gave it me, sir," says I.

"Call Bunting!" And up the little ungrateful chap came. Would you believe it, he burst into tears,—told that the waistcoat had been given him by his mother, and that he had been forced to give it for a debt to Copper-Merchant, as the nasty little blackguard called me? He then said how, for three-halfpence, he had been compelled to

pay me three shillings (the sneak! as if he had been *obliged* to borrow the three-halfpence!)—how all the other boys had been swindled (swindled!) by me in like manner,—and how, with only twelve shillings, I had managed to scrape together four guineas. . . . .

My courage almost fails me as I describe the shameful scene that followed. The boys were called in, my own little account-book was dragged out of my cupboard, to prove how much I had received from each, and every farthing of my money was paid back to them. The tyrant took the thirty shillings that my dear parents had given me, and said he should put them into the poor-box at church; and, after having made a long discourse to the boys about meanness and usury, he said, "Take off your coat, Mr. Stubbs, and restore Bunting his waistcoat." I did, and stood without coat and waistcoat in the midst of the nasty grinning boys. I was going to put on my coat,—

"Stop!" says he. "TAKE DOWN HIS BREECHES!"

Ruthless, brutal villain! Sam Hopkins, the biggest boy, took them down—horsed me—and *I was flogged, sir:* yes flogged! O revenge! I, Robert Stubbs, who had done nothing but what was right, was brutally flogged at ten years of age!—Though February was the shortest month, I remembered it long.

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## MARCH.—SHOWERY.

WHEN my mamma heard of the treatment of her darling she was for bringing an action against the schoolmaster, or else for tearing his eyes out (when, dear soul! she would not have torn the eyes out of a flea, had it been her own injury), and, at the very least, for having me removed from the school where I had been so shamefully treated. But papa was stern for once, and vowed that I had been served quite right, declared that I should not be removed from the school, and sent old Swishtail a brace of pheasants for what he called his kindness to me. Of these the old gentleman invited me to partake, and made a very queer speech at dinner, as he was cutting them up, about the excellence of my parents, and his own determination to be *kinder still* to me, if ever I ventured on such practices again. So I was obliged to give up my old trade of lending: for the

Doctor declared that any boy who borrowed should be flogged, and any one who *paid* should be flogged twice as much. There was no standing against such a prohibition as this, and my little commerce was ruined.

I was not very high in the school: not having been able to get farther than that dreadful *Propria quæ maribus* in the Latin grammar, of which, though I have it by heart even now, I never could understand a syllable: but, on account of my size, my age, and the prayers of my mother, was allowed to have the privilege of the bigger boys, and on holidays to walk about in the town. Great dandies we were, too, when we thus went out. I recollect my costume very well: a thunder-and-lightning coat, a white waistcoat embroidered neatly at the pockets, a lace frill, a pair of knee-breeches, and elegant white cotton or silk stockings. This did very well, but still I was dissatisfied: I wanted *a pair of boots*. Three boys in the school had boots—I was mad to have them too.

But my papa, when I wrote to him, would not hear of it; and three pounds, the price of a pair, was too large a sum for my mother to take from the house-keeping, or for me to pay, in the present impoverished state of my exchequer; but the desire for the boots was so strong, that have them I must at any rate.

There was a German bootmaker who had just set up in *our* town in those days, who afterwards made his fortune in London. I determined to have the boots from him, and did not despair, before the end of a year or two, either to leave the school, when I should not mind his dunning me, or to screw the money from mamma, and so pay him.

So I called upon this man—Stiffelkind was his name—and he took my measure for a pair.

"You are a vary yong gentleman to wear dop-boots," said the shoemaker.

"I suppose, fellow," says I, "that is my business and not yours. Either make the boots or not—but when you speak to a man of my rank, speak respectfully!" And I poured out a number of oaths, in order to impress him with a notion of my respectability.

They had the desired effect. "Stay, sir," says he. "I have a nice littel pair of dop-boots dat I tink will jost do for you." And he produced, sure enough, the most elegant things I ever saw. "Day were made," said he, "for de Honourable Mr. Stiffney, of de Gards, but were too small."

"Ah, indeed!" said I. "Stiffney is a relation of mine. And vhat, you scoundrel, will you have the impudence to ask for these ıings?" He replied, "Three pounds."

"Well," said I, "they are confoundedly dear; but, as you will ave a long time to wait for your money, why, I shall have my evenge you see." The man looked alarmed, and began a speech: Sare,—I cannot let dem go vidout"——but a bright thought struck ıe, and I interrupted—"Sir! don't sir me. Take off the boots, ellow, and, hark ye, when you speak to a nobleman, don't say—Sir."

"A hundert tousand pardons, my lort," says he: "if I had known ou were a lort, I vood never have called you—Sir. Vat name shall put down in my books?"

"Name?—oh! why, Lord Cornwallis, to be sure," said I, as I valked off in the boots.

"And vat shall I do vid my lort's shoes?"

"Keep them until I send for them," said I. And, giving him a ıatronizing bow, I walked out of the shop, as the German tied up my hoes in paper.

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This story I would not have told, but that my whole life turned ıpon these accursed boots. I walked back to school as proud as a ıeacock, and easily succeeded in satisfying the boys as to the manner n which I came by my new ornaments.

Well, one fatal Monday morning—the blackest of all black-Mondays that ever I knew—as we were all of us playing between chool-hours, I saw a posse of boys round a stranger, who seemed to ıe looking out for one of us. A sudden trembling seized me—I knew t was Stiffelkind. What had brought him here? He talked loud, and eemed angry. So I rushed into the school-room, and burying my head ıetween my hands, began reading for dear life.

"I vant Lort Cornvallis," said the horrid bootmaker. "His ortship belongs, I know, to dis honourable school, for I saw him vid le boys at chorch yesterday."

"Lord who?"

"Vy, Lort Cornvallis to be sure—a very fat yong nobleman, vid ed hair: he squints a little, and svears dreadfully."

"There's no Lord Cornvallis here," said one; and there was a ıause.

"Stop! I have it," says that odious Bunting. "*It must be Stubbs!*"

And "Stubbs! Stubbs!" every one cried out, while I was so busy at my book as not to hear a word.

At last, two of the biggest chaps rushed into the school-room, and seizing each an arm, run me into the playground—bolt up against the shoemaker.

"Dis is my man. I beg your lortship's pardon," says he, "I have brought your lortship's shoes, vich you left. See, dey have been in dis parcel ever since you vent avay in my boots."

"Shoes, fellow!" says I. "I never saw your face before!" For I knew there was nothing for it but brazening it out. "Upon the honour of a gentleman!" said I, turning round to the boys. They hesitated; and if the trick had turned in my favour, fifty of them would have seized hold of Stiffelkind and drubbed him soundly.

"Stop!" says Bunting (hang him!) "Let's see the shoes. If they fit him, why then the cobbler's right." They did fit me; and not only that, but the name of STUBBS was written in them at full length.

"Vat!" said Stiffelkind. "Is he not a lort? So help me Himmel, I never did vonce tink of looking at de shoes, which have been lying ever since in dis piece of brown paper." And then, gathering anger as he went on, he thundered out so much of his abuse of me, in his German-English, that the boys roared with laughter. Swishtail came in in the midst of the disturbance, and asked what the noise meant.

"It's only Lord Cornwallis, sir," said the boys, "battling with his shoemaker about the price of a pair of top-boots."

"Oh, sir," said I, "it was only in fun that I called myself Lord Cornwallis."

"In fun!—Where are the boots? And you, sir, give me your bill." My beautiful boots were brought; and Stiffelkind produced his bill. "Lord Cornwallis to Samuel Stiffelkind, for a pair of boots —four guineas."

"You have been fool enough, sir," says the Doctor, looking very stern, "to let this boy impose on you as a lord; and knave enough to charge him double the value of the article you sold him. Take back the boots, sir! I won't pay a penny of your bill; nor can you get a penny. As for you, sir, you miserable swindler and cheat, I shall not flog you as I did before, but I shall send you home: you are not fit to be the companion of honest boys."

"*Suppose we duck him* before he goes?" piped out a very small voice. The Doctor grinned significantly, and left the school-room;

and the boys knew by this they might have their will. They seized me and carried me to the playground pump: they pumped upon me until I was half dead; and the monster, Stiffelkind, stood looking on for the half-hour the operation lasted.

I suppose the Doctor, at last, thought I had had pumping enough, for he rang the school-bell, and the boys were obliged to leave me. As I got out of the trough, Stiffelkind was alone with me. "Vell, my lort," says he, "you have paid *something* for dese boots, but not all. By Jubider, *you shall never hear de end of dem.*" And I didn't.

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## APRIL.—FOOLING.

AFTER this, as you may fancy, I left this disgusting establishment, and lived for some time along with pa and mamma at home. My education was finished, at least mamma and I agreed that it was; and from boyhood until hobbadyhoyhood (which I take to be about the sixteenth year of the life of a young man, and may be likened to the month of April when spring begins to bloom)—from fourteen until seventeen, I say, I remained at home, doing nothing—for which I have ever since had a great taste—the idol of my mamma, who took part in all my quarrels with father, and used regularly to rob the weekly expenses in order to find me in pocket-money. Poor soul! many and many is the guinea I have had from her in that way; and so she enabled me to cut a very pretty figure.

Papa was for having me at this time articled to a merchant, or put to some profession; but mamma and I agreed that I was born to be a gentleman and not a tradesman, and the army was the only place for me. Everybody was a soldier in those times, for the French war had just begun, and the whole country was swarming with militia regiments. "We'll get him a commission in a marching regiment," said my father. "As we have no money to purchase him up, he'll *fight* his way, I make no doubt." And papa looked at me with a kind of air of contempt, as much as to say he doubted whether I should be very eager for such a dangerous way of bettering myself.

I wish you could have heard mamma's screech when he talked

so coolly of my going out to fight! "What! send him abroad, across the horrid, horrid sea—to be wrecked and perhaps drowned, and only to land for the purpose of fighting the wicked Frenchmen,—to be wounded, and perhaps kick—kick—killed! Oh, Thomas, Thomas! would you murder me and your boy?" There was a regular scene. However, it ended—as it always did—in mother's getting the better, and it was settled that I should go into the militia. And why not? The uniform is just as handsome, and the danger not half so great. I don't think in the course of my whole military experience I ever fought anything, except an old woman, who had the impudence to hallo out, "Heads up, lobster!"—Well, I joined the North Bungays, and was fairly launched into the world.

I was not a handsome man, I know; but there was *something* about me—that's very evident—for the girls always laughed when they talked to me, and the men, though they affected to call me a poor little creature, squint-eyes, knock-knees, red-head, and so on, were evidently annoyed by my success, for they hated me so confoundedly. Even at the present time they go on, though I have given up gallivanting, as I call it. But in the April of my existence, —that is, in anno Domini 1791, or so—it was a different case; and having nothing else to do, and being bent upon bettering my condition, I did some very pretty things in that way. But I was not hot-headed and imprudent, like most young fellows. Don't fancy I looked for beauty! Pish!—I wasn't such a fool. Nor for temper; I don't care about a bad temper: I could break any woman's heart in two years. What I wanted was to get on in the world. Of course I didn't *prefer* an ugly woman, or a shrew; and when the choice offered, would certainly put up with a handsome, good-humoured girl, with plenty of money, as any honest man would.

Now there were two tolerably rich girls in our parts: Miss Magdalen Crutty, with twelve thousand pounds (and, to do her justice, as plain a girl as ever I saw), and Miss Mary Waters, a fine, tall, plump, smiling, peach-cheeked, golden-haired, white-skinned lass, with only ten. Mary Waters lived with her uncle, the Doctor, who had helped me into the world, and who was trusted with this little orphan charge very soon after. My mother, as you have heard, was so fond of Bates, and Bates so fond of little Mary, that both, at first, were almost always in our house; and I used to call her my little wife as

soon as I could speak, and before she could walk almost. It was beautiful to see us, the neighbours said.

Well, when her brother, the lieutenant of an India ship, came to be captain, and actually gave Mary five thousand pounds, when she was about ten years old, and promised her five thousand more, there was a great talking, and bobbing, and smiling between the Doctor and my parents, and Mary and I were left together more than ever, and she was told to call me her little husband. And she did; and it was considered a settled thing from that day. She was really amazingly fond of me.

Can any one call me mercenary after that? Though Miss Crutty had twelve thousand, and Mary only ten (five in hand, and five in the bush), I stuck faithfully to Mary. As a matter of course, Miss Crutty hated Miss Waters. The fact was, Mary had all the country dangling after her, and not a soul would come to Magdalen, for all her 12,000*l.* I used to be attentive to her though (as it's always useful to be); and Mary would sometimes laugh and sometimes cry at my flirting with Magdalen. This I thought proper very quickly to check. "Mary," said I, "you know that my love for you is disinterested,—for I am faithful to you, though Miss Crutty is richer than you. Don't fly into a rage, then, because I pay her attentions, when you know that my heart and my promise are engaged to you."

The fact is, to tell a little bit of a secret, there is nothing like the having two strings to your bow. "Who knows?" thought I. "Mary may die; and then where are my 10,000*l.*?" So I used to be very kind indeed to Miss Crutty; and well it was that I was so: for when I was twenty and Mary eighteen, I'm blest if news did not arrive that Captain Waters, who was coming home to England with all his money in rupees, had been taken—ship, rupees, self and all—by a French privateer; and Mary, instead of 10,000*l.*, had only 5,000*l.*, making a difference of no less than 350*l.* per annum betwixt her and Miss Crutty.

I had just joined my regiment (the famous North Bungay Fencibles, Colonel Craw commanding) when this news reached me; and you may fancy how a young man, in an expensive regiment and mess, having uniforms and what not to pay for, and a figure to cut in the world, felt at hearing such news! "My dearest Robert," wrote Miss Waters, "will deplore my dear brother's loss: but not, I am

sure, the money which that kind and generous soul had promised me. I have still five thousand pounds, and with this and your own little fortune (I had 1,000*l.* in the Five per Cents.!) we shall be as happy and contented as possible."

Happy and contented indeed! Didn't I know how my father got on with his 300*l.* a year, and how it was all he could do out of it to add a hundred a year to my narrow income, and live himself! My mind was made up. I instantly mounted the coach and flew to our village,—to Mr. Crutty's, of course. It was next door to Doctor Bates's; but I had no business *there*.

I found Magdalen in the garden. "Heavens, Mr. Stubbs!" said she, as in my new uniform I appeared before her, "I really did never —such a handsome officer—expect to see you." And she made as if she would blush, and began to tremble violently. I led her to a garden-seat. I seized her hand—it was not withdrawn. I pressed it;—I thought the pressure was returned. I flung myself on my knees, and then I poured into her ear a little speech which I had made on the top of the coach. "Divine Miss Crutty," said I; "idol of my soul! It was but to catch one glimpse of you that I passed through this garden. I never intended to breathe the secret passion" (oh, no; of course not) "which was wearing my life away. You know my unfortunate pre-engagement—it is broken, and *for ever!* I am free;—free, but to be your slave,—your humblest, fondest, truest slave!" And so on. . . . .

"Oh, Mr. Stubbs," said she, as I imprinted a kiss upon her cheek, "I can't refuse you; but I fear you are a sad naughty man. . . . ."

Absorbed in the delicious reverie which was caused by the dear creature's confusion, we were both silent for a while, and should have remained so for hours perhaps, so lost were we in happiness, had I not been suddenly roused by a voice exclaiming from behind us—

"*Don't cry, Mary! He is a swindling, sneaking scoundrel, and you are well rid of him!*"

I turned round. O heaven, there stood Mary, weeping on Doctor Bates's arm, while that miserable apothecary was looking at me with the utmost scorn. The gardener, who had let me in, had told them of my arrival, and now stood grinning behind them. "Impérence!" was my Magdalen's only exclamation, as she flounced

by with the utmost self-possession, while I, glancing daggers at *the spies*, followed her. We retired to the parlour, where she repeated to me the strongest assurances of her love.

I thought I was a made man. Alas! I was only an APRIL FOOL!

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## MAY.—RESTORATION DAY.

AS the month of May is considered, by poets and other philosophers, to be devoted by Nature to the great purpose of love-making, I may as well take advantage of that season and acquaint you with the result of *my* amours.

Young, gay, fascinating, and an ensign—I had completely won the heart of my Magdalen; and as for Miss Waters and her nasty uncle the Doctor, there was a complete split between us, as you may fancy; Miss pretending, forsooth, that she was glad I had broken off the match, though she would have given her eyes, the little minx, to have had it on again. But this was out of the question. My father, who had all sorts of queer notions, said I had acted like a rascal in the business; my mother took my part, in course, and declared I acted rightly, as I always did: and I got leave of absence from the regiment in order to press my beloved Magdalen to marry me out of hand—knowing, from reading and experience, the extraordinary mutability of human affairs.

Besides, as the dear girl was seventeen years older than myself, and as bad in health as she was in temper, how was I to know that the grim king of terrors might not carry her off before she became mine? With the tenderest warmth, then, and most delicate ardour, I continued to press my suit. The happy day was fixed—the ever memorable 10th of May, 1792. The wedding-clothes were ordered; and, to make things secure, I penned a little paragraph for the county paper to this effect:—"Marriage in High Life. We understand that Ensign Stubbs, of the North Bungay Fencibles, and son of Thomas Stubbs, of Sloffemsquiggle, Esquire, is about to lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished daughter of Solomon Crutty, Esquire,

of the same place. A fortune of twenty thousand pounds is, we hear, the lady's portion. 'None but the brave deserve the fair.'"

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"Have you informed your relatives, my beloved?" said I to Magdalen one day after sending the above notice; "will any of them attend at your marriage?"

"Uncle Sam will, I dare say," said Miss Crutty, "dear mamma's brother."

"And who *was* your dear mamma?" said I: for Miss Crutty's respected parent had been long since dead, and I never heard her name mentioned in the family.

Magdalen blushed, and cast down her eyes to the ground. "Mamma was a foreigner," at last she said.

"And of what country?"

"A German. Papa married her when she was very young:—she was not of a very good family," said Miss Crutty, hesitating.

"And what care I for family, my love!" said I, tenderly kissing the knuckles of the hand which I held. "She must have been an angel who gave birth to you."

"She was a shoemaker's daughter."

"*A German shoemaker!* Hang 'em!" thought I, "I have had enough of them;" and so broke up this conversation, which did not somehow please me.

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Well, the day was drawing near: the clothes were ordered; the banns were read. My dear mamma had built a cake about the size of a washing-tub; and I was only waiting for a week to pass to put me in possession of twelve thousand pounds in the *Five* per Cents., as they were in those days, heaven bless 'em! Little did I know the storm that was brewing, and the disappointment which was to fall upon a young man who really did his best to get a fortune.

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"Oh, Robert!" said my Magdalen to me, two days before the match was to come off, "I have *such* a kind letter from uncle Sam in London. I wrote to him as you wished. He says that he is coming down to-morrow; that he has heard of you often, and knows your character very well; and that he has got a *very handsome present* for us! What can it be, I wonder?"

"Is he rich, my soul's adored?" says I.

"He is a bachelor, with a fine trade, and nobody to leave his money to."

"His present can't be less than a thousand pounds?" says I.

"Or, perhaps, a silver tea-set, and some corner-dishes," says she.

But we could not agree to this: it was too little—too mean for a man of her uncle's wealth; and we both determined it must be the thousand pounds.

"Dear good uncle! he's to be here by the coach," says Magdalen. "Let us ask a little party to meet him." And so we did, and so they came: my father and mother, old Crutty in his best wig, and the parson who was to marry us the next day. The coach was to come in at six. And there was the tea-table, and there was the punch-bowl, and everybody ready and smiling to receive our dear uncle from London.

Six o'clock came, and the coach, and the man from the "Green Dragon" with a portmanteau, and a fat old gentleman walking behind, of whom I just caught a glimpse—a venerable old gentleman: I thought I'd seen him before.

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Then there was a ring at the bell; then a scuffling and bumping in the passage: then old Crutty rushed out, and a great laughing and talking, and "*How are you?*" and so on, was heard at the door; and then the parlour-door was flung open, and Crutty cried out with a loud voice—

"Good people all! my brother-in-law, Mr. STIFFELKIND!"

*Mr. Stiffelkind!*—I trembled as I heard the name!

Miss Crutty kissed him; mamma made him a curtsey, and papa made him a bow; and Dr. Snorter, the parson, seized his hand and shook it most warmly: then came my turn!

"Vat!" says he. "It is my dear goot yong frend from Doctor Schvis'hentail's! is dis de yong gentleman's honorable moder" (mamma smiled and made a curtsey), "and dis his fader? Sare and madam, you should be broud of soch a sonn. And you my niece, if you have him for a husband you vill be locky, dat is all. Vat dink you, broder Croty, and Madame Stobbs, I 'ave made your sonn's boots! Ha—ha!"

My mamma laughed, and said, "I did not know it, but I am sure, sir, he has as pretty a leg for a boot as any in the whole county."

Old Stiffelkind roared louder. "A very nice leg, ma'am, and a very *sheap boot too.* Vat! did you not know I make his boots?

Perhaps you did not know something else too—p'raps you did not know" (and here the monster clapped his hand on the table and made the punch-ladle tremble in the bowl)—"p'raps you did not know as dat yong man, dat Stobbs, dat sneaking, baltry, squinting fellow, is as vicked as he is ogly. He bot a pair of boots from me and never paid for dem. Dat is noting, nobody never pays; but he bought a pair of boots, and called himself Lord Cornvallis. And I was fool enough to believe him vonce. But look you, niece Magdalen, I 'ave got five tousand pounds: if you marry him I vill not give you a benny. But look you what I will gif you: I bromised you a bresent, and I will give you DESE!"

And the old monster produced THOSE VERY BOOTS which Swishtail had made him take back.

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I *didn't* marry Miss Crutty: I am not sorry for it though. She was a nasty, ugly, ill-tempered wretch, and I've always said so ever since.

And all this arose from those infernal boots, and that unlucky paragraph in the county paper—I'll tell you how.

In the first place, it was taken up as a quiz by one of the wicked, profligate, unprincipled organs of the London press, who chose to be very facetious about the "Marriage in High Life," and made all sorts of jokes about me and my dear Miss Crutty.

Secondly, it was read in this London paper by my mortal enemy, Bunting, who had been introduced to old Stiffelkind's acquaintance by my adventure with him, and had his shoes made regularly by that foreign upstart.

Thirdly, he happened to want a pair of shoes mended at this particular period, and as he was measured by the disgusting old High-Dutch cobbler, he told him his old friend Stubbs was going to be married.

"And to whom?" said old Stiffelkind. "To a voman wit geld, I vill take my oath."

"Yes," says Bunting, "a country girl—a Miss Magdalen Carotty or Crotty, at a place called Sloffemsquiggle."

"*Schloffemschwiegel!*" bursts out the dreadful bootmaker. "Mein Gott, mein Gott! das geht nicht! I tell you, sare, it is no go. Miss Crotty is my niece. I vill go down myself. I vill never let her marry dat goot-for-nothing schwindler and tief." *Such* was the language that the scoundrel ventured to use regarding me!

## JUNE.—MARROWBONES AND CLEAVERS.

WAS there ever such confounded ill-luck? My whole life has been a tissue of ill-luck: although I have laboured perhaps harder than any man to make a fortune, something always tumbled it down. In love and in war I was not like others. In my marriages, I had an eye to the main chance; and you see how some unlucky blow would come and throw them over. In the army I was just as prudent, and just as unfortunate. What with judicious betting, and horse-swapping, good-luck at billiards, and economy, I do believe I put by my pay every year,—and that is what few can say who have but an allowance of a hundred a year.

I'll tell you how it was. I used to be very kind to the young men; I chose their horses for them, and their wine: and showed them how to play billiards, or écarté, of long mornings, when there was nothing better to do. I didn't cheat: I'd rather die than cheat;—but if fellows *will* play, I wasn't the man to say no—why should I? There was one young chap in our regiment of whom I really think I cleared 300*l.* a year.

His name was Dobble. He was a tailor's son, and wanted to be a gentleman. A poor weak young creature; easy to be made tipsy; easy to be cheated; and easy to be frightened. It was a blessing for him that I found him; for if anybody else had, they would have plucked him of every shilling.

Ensign Dobble and I were sworn friends. I rode his horses for him, and chose his champagne, and did everything, in fact, that a superior mind does for an inferior,—when the inferior has got the money. We were inseparables,—hunting everywhere in couples. We even managed to fall in love with two sisters, as young soldiers will do, you know; for the dogs fall in love, with every change of quarters.

Well, once, in the year 1793 (it was just when the French had chopped poor Louis's head off), Dobble and I, gay young chaps as ever wore sword by side, had cast our eyes upon two young ladies by the name of Brisket, daughters of a butcher in the town where we were quartered. The dear girls fell in love with us, of course. And many a pleasant walk in the country, many a treat to a tea-garden, many a smart riband and brooch used Dobble and I (for his father allowed him 600*l.*, and our purses were in common) present to these

young ladies. One day, fancy our pleasure at receiving a note couched thus:—

"DEER CAPTING STUBBS AND DOBBLE—Miss Briskets presents their compliments, and as it is probble that our papa will be till twelve at the corprayshun dinner, we request the pleasure of their company to tea."

Didn't we go! Punctually at six we were in the little back-parlour; we quaffed more Bohea, and made more love, than half-a-dozen ordinary men could. At nine, a little punch-bowl succeeded to the little teapot; and, bless the girls! a nice fresh steak was frizzling on the gridiron for our supper. Butchers were butchers then, and their parlour was their kitchen too; at least old Brisket's was—one door leading into the shop, and one into the yard, on the other side of which was the slaughter-house.

Fancy, then, our horror when, just at this critical time, we heard the shop-door open, a heavy staggering step on the flags, and a loud husky voice from the shop, shouting, "Hallo, Susan; hallo, Betsy! show a light!" Dobble turned as white as a sheet; the two girls each as red as a lobster; I alone preserved my presence of mind. "The back-door," says I.—"The dog's in the court," say they. "He's not so bad as the man," said I. "Stop!" cries Susan, flinging open the door, and rushing to the fire. "Take *this* and perhaps it will quiet him."

What do you think "*this*" was? I'm blest if it was not the *steak!*

She pushed us out, patted and hushed the dog, and was in again in a minute. The moon was shining on the court, and on the slaughter-house, where there hung the white ghastly-looking carcases of a couple of sheep; a great gutter ran down the court—a gutter of *blood!* The dog was devouring his beef-steak (*our* beef-steak) in silence; and we could see through the little window the girls bustling about to pack up the supper-things, and presently the shop-door being opened, old Brisket entering, staggering, angry, and drunk. What's more, we could see, perched on a high stool, and nodding politely, as if to salute old Brisket, the *feather of Dobble's cocked hat!* When Dobble saw it, he turned white, and deadly sick; and the poor fellow, in an agony of fright, sunk shivering down upon one of the butcher's cutting-blocks, which was in the yard.

We saw old Brisket look steadily (as steadily as he could) at

the confounded, impudent, pert, waggling feather; and then an idea began to dawn upon his mind, that there was a head to the hat; and then he slowly rose up—he was a man of six feet, and fifteen stone—he rose up, put on his apron and sleeves, and *took down his cleaver.*

"Betsy," says he, "open the yard door." But the poor girls screamed, and flung on their knees, and begged, and wept, and did their very best to prevent him. "OPEN THE YARD DOOR!" says he, with a thundering loud voice; and the great bull-dog, hearing it, started up and uttered a yell which sent me flying to the other end of the court.—Dobble couldn't move; he was sitting on the block, blubbering like a baby.

The door opened, and out Mr. Brisket came.

"*To him Jowler!*" says he. "*Keep him Jowler!*"—and the horrid dog flew at me, and I flew back into the corner, and drew my sword, determining to sell my life dearly.

"That's it," says Brisket. "Keep him there,—good dog,—good dog! And now, sir," says he, turning round to Dobble, "is this your hat?"

"Yes," says Dobble, fit to choke with fright.

"Well, then," says Brisket, "it's my—(hic)—my painful duty to —(hic)—to tell you, that as I've got your hat, I must have your head;—it's painful, but it must be done. You'd better—(hic)—settle yourself com—comfumarably against that—(hic)—that block, and I'll chop it off before you can say Jack—(hic)—no, I mean Jack Robinson."

Dobble went down on his knees and shrieked out, "I'm an only son, Mr. Brisket! I'll marry her, sir; I will, upon my honour, sir.—Consider my mother, sir; consider my mother."

"That's it, sir," says Brisket—"that's a good—(hic)—a good boy;—just put your head down quietly—and I'll have it off—yes, off —as if you were Louis the Six—the Sixtix—the Siktickleteenth.—I'll chop the other *chap afterwards.*"

When I heard this, I made a sudden bound back, and gave such a cry as any man might who was in such a way. The ferocious Jowler, thinking I was going to escape, flew at my throat; screaming furious, I flung out my arms in a kind of desperation,—and, to my wonder, down fell the dog, dead, and run through the body!

* * * * *

At this moment a posse of people rushed in upon old Brisket,—one of his daughters had had the sense to summon them,—and Dobble's head was saved. And when they saw the dog lying dead at my feet, my ghastly look, my bloody sword, they gave me no small credit for my bravery. "A terrible fellow that Stubbs," said they; and so the mess said, the next day.

I didn't tell them that the dog had committed *suicide*—why should I? And I didn't say a word about Dobble's cowardice. I said he was a brave fellow, and fought like a tiger; and this prevented *him* from telling tales. I had the dogskin made into a pair of pistol-holsters, and looked so fierce, and got such a name for courage in our regiment, that when we had to meet the regulars, Bob Stubbs was always the man put forward to support the honour of the corps. The women, you know, adore courage; and such was my reputation at this time, that I might have had my pick out of half-a-dozen, with three, four, or five thousand pounds apiece, who were dying for love of me and my red coat. But I wasn't such a fool. I had been twice on the point of marriage, and twice disappointed; and I vowed by all the Saints to have a wife, and a rich one. Depend upon this, as an infallible maxim to guide you through life: *It's as easy to get a rich wife as a poor one;*—the same bait that will hook a fly will hook a salmon.

## JULY.—SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS.

DOBBLE'S reputation for courage was not increased by the butcher's-dog adventure; but mine stood very high: little Stubbs was voted the boldest chap of all the bold North Bungays. And though I must confess, what was proved by subsequent circumstances, that nature has *not* endowed me with a large, or even, I may say, an average share of bravery, yet a man is very willing to flatter himself to the contrary; and, after a little time, I got to believe that my killing the dog was an action of undaunted courage, and that I was as gallant as any of the one hundred thousand heroes of our army. I always had a military taste—it's only the brutal part of the profession, the horrid fighting and blood, that I don't like.

I suppose the regiment was not very brave itself—being only militia; but certain it was, that Stubbs was considered a most terrible fellow, and I swore so much, and looked so fierce, that you would have fancied I had made half a hundred campaigns. I was second in several duels: the umpire in all disputes; and such a crack-shot myself, that fellows were shy of insulting me. As for Dobble, I took him under my protection; and he became so attached to me, that we ate, drank, and rode together every day; his father didn't care for money, so long as his son was in good company—and what so good as that of the celebrated Stubbs? Heigho! I *was* good company in those days, and a brave fellow too, as I should have remained, but for—what I shall tell the public immediately.

It happened, in the fatal year ninety-six, that the brave North Bungays were quartered at Portsmouth, a maritime place, which I need not describe, and which I wish I had never seen. I might have been a General now, or, at least, a rich man.

The red-coats carried everything before them in those days; and I, such a crack character as I was in my regiment, was very well received by the townspeople: many dinners I had; many tea-parties; many lovely young ladies did I lead down the pleasant country-dances.

Well, although I had had the two former rebuffs in love which I have described, my heart was still young; and the fact was, knowing that a girl with a fortune was my only chance, I made love here as furiously as ever. I shan't describe the lovely creatures on whom I fixed, whilst at Portsmouth. I tried more than—several—and it is a singular fact, which I never have been able to account for, that, successful as I was with ladies of maturer age, by the young ones I was refused regular.

But "faint heart never won fair lady;" and so I went on, and on, until I had got a Miss Clopper, a tolerably rich navy-contractor's daughter, into such a way, that I really don't think she could have refused me. Her brother, Captain Clopper, was in a line regiment, and helped me as much as ever he could: he swore I was such a brave fellow.

As I had received a number of attentions from Clopper, I determined to invite him to dinner; which I could do without any sacrifice of my principle upon this point: for the fact is, Dobble lived at an inn, and as he sent all his bills to his father, I made no scruple to

use his table. We dined in the coffee-room, Dobble bringing *his* friend; and so we made a party *carry*, as the French say. Some naval officers were occupied in a similar way at a table next to ours.

Well—I didn't spare the bottle, either for myself or for my friends; and we grew very talkative, and very affectionate as the drinking went on. Each man told stories of his gallantry in the field, or amongst the ladies, as officers will, after dinner. Clopper confided to the company his wish that I should marry his sister, and vowed that he thought me the best fellow in Christendom.

Ensign Dobble assented to this. "But let Miss Clopper beware," says he, "for Stubbs is a sad fellow: he has had I don't know how many *liaisons* already; and he has been engaged to I don't know how many women."

"Indeed!" says Clopper. "Come, Stubbs, tell us your adventures."

"Psha!" said I, modestly, "there is nothing, indeed, to tell. I have been in love, my dear boy—who has not?—and I have been jilted—who has not?"

Clopper swore that he would blow his sister's brains out if ever *she* served me so.

"Tell him about Miss Crutty," said Dobble. "He! he! Stubbs served *that* woman out, anyhow; she didn't jilt *him*, I'll be sworn."

"Really, Dobble, you are too bad, and should not mention names. The fact is, the girl was desperately in love with me, and had money—sixty thousand pounds, upon my reputation. Well, everything was arranged, when who should come down from London but a relation."

"Well, and did he prevent the match?"

"Prevent it—yes, sir, I believe you he did; though not in the sense that *you* mean. He would have given his eyes—ay, and ten thousand pounds more—if I would have accepted the girl, but I would not."

"Why, in the name of goodness?"

"Sir, her uncle was a *shoemaker*. I never would debase myself by marrying into such a family."

"Of course not," said Dobble; "he couldn't, you know. Well, now—tell him about the other girl, Mary Waters, you know."

"Hush, Dobble, hush!·don't you see one of those naval officers has turned round and heard you? My dear Clopper, it was a mere childish bagatelle."

"Well, but let's have it," said Clopper—"let's have it. I won't tell my sister, you know." And he put his hand to his nose and looked monstrous wise.

"Nothing of that sort, Clopper—no, no—'pon honour—little Bob Stubbs is no *libertine;* and the story is very simple. You see that my father has a small place, merely a few hundred acres, at Sloffemsquiggle. Isn't it a funny name? Hang it, there's the naval gentleman staring again,"—(I looked terribly fierce as I returned this officer's stare, and continued in a loud careless voice). Well, at this Sloffemsquiggle there lived a girl, a Miss Waters, the niece of some blackguard apothecary in the neighbourhood; but my mother took a fancy to the girl, and had her up to the park and petted her. We were both young—and—and—the girl fell in love with me, that's the fact. I was obliged to repel some rather warm advances that she made me; and here, upon my honour as a gentleman, you have all the story about which that silly Dobble makes such a noise."

Just as I finished this sentence, I found myself suddenly taken by the nose, and a voice shouting out,—

"Mr. Stubbs, you are A LIAR AND A SCOUNDREL! Take this, sir,—and this, for daring to meddle with the name of an innocent lady."

I turned round as well as I could—for the ruffian had pulled me out of my chair—and beheld a great marine monster, six feet high, who was occupied in beating and kicking me, in the most ungentlemanly manner, on my cheeks, my ribs, and between the tails of my coat. "He is a liar, gentlemen, and a scoundrel! The bootmaker had detected him in swindling, and so his niece refused him. Miss Waters was engaged to him from childhood, and he deserted her for the bootmaker's niece, who was richer."—And then sticking a card between my stock and my coat-collar, in what is called the scruff of my neck, the disgusting brute gave me another blow behind my back, and left the coffee-room with his friends.

Dobble raised me up; and taking the card from my neck, read, CAPTAIN WATERS. Clopper poured me out a glass of water, and said in my ear, "If this is true, you are an infernal scoundrel, Stubbs; and must fight me, after Captain Waters;" and he flounced out of the room.

I had but one course to pursue. I sent the Captain a short and contemptuous note, saying that he was beneath my anger. As for Clopper, I did not condescend to notice his remark; but in order

to get rid of the troublesome society of these low blackguards, I determined to gratify an inclination I had long entertained, and make a little tour. I applied for leave of absence, and set off *that very night.* I can fancy the disappointment of the brutal Waters, on coming, as he did, the next morning to my quarters and finding me *gone.* Ha! ha!

After this adventure I became sick of a military life—at least the life of my own regiment, where the officers, such was their unaccountable meanness and prejudice against me, absolutely refused to see me at mess. Colonel Craw sent me a letter to this effect, which I treated as it deserved.—I never once alluded to it in any way, and have since never spoken a single word to any man in the North Bungays.

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## AUGUST.—DOGS HAVE THEIR DAYS.

SEE, now, what life is! I have had ill-luck on ill-luck from that day to this. I have sunk in the world, and, instead of riding my horse and drinking my wine, as a real gentleman should, have hardly enough now to buy a pint of ale; ay, and am very glad when anybody will treat me to one. Why, why was I born to undergo such unmerited misfortunes?

You must know that very soon after my adventure with Miss Crutty, and that cowardly ruffian, Captain Waters (he sailed the day after his insult to me, or I should most certainly have blown his brains out; *now* he is living in England, and is my relation; but, of course, I cut the fellow)—very soon after these painful events another happened, which ended, too, in a sad disappointment. My dear papa died, and, instead of leaving five thousand pounds, as I expected at the very least, left only his estate, which was worth but two. The land and house were left to me; to mamma and my sisters he left, to be sure, a sum of two thousand pounds in the hands of that eminent firm Messrs. Pump, Aldgate and Co., which failed within six months after his demise, and paid in five years about one shilling and ninepence in the pound; which really was all my dear mother and sisters had to live upon.

The poor creatures were quite unused to money matters; and, would you believe it? when the news came of Pump and Aldgate's failure, mamma only smiled, and threw her eyes up to heaven, and said, "Blessed be God, that we have still wherewithal to live. There are tens of thousands in this world, dear children, who would count our poverty riches." And with this she kissed my two sisters, who began to blubber, as girls always will do, and threw their arms round her neck, and then round my neck, until I was half stifled with their embraces, and slobbered all over with their tears.

"Dearest mamma," said I, "I am very glad to see the noble manner in which you bear your loss; and more still to know that you are so rich as to be able to put up with it." The fact was, I really thought the old lady had got a private hoard of her own, as many of them have—a thousand pounds or so in a stocking. Had she put by thirty pounds a year, as well she might, for the thirty years of her marriage, there would have been nine hundred pounds clear, and no mistake. But still I was angry to think that any such paltry concealment had been practised—concealment too of *my* money; so I turned on her pretty sharply, and continued my speech. "You say, ma'am, that you are rich, and that Pump and Aldgate's failure has no effect upon you. I am very happy to hear you say so, Ma'am—very happy that you *are* rich; and I should like to know where your property, my father's property, for you had none of your own,—I should like to know where this money lies—*where you have concealed it*, Ma'am; and, permit me to say, that when I agreed to board you and my two sisters for eighty pounds a year, I did not know that you had *other* resources than those mentioned in my blessed father's will."

This I said to her because I hated the meanness of concealment, not because I lost by the bargain of boarding them: for the three poor things did not eat much more than sparrows; and I've often since calculated that I had a clear twenty pounds a year profit out of them.

Mamma and the girls looked quite astonished when I made the speech. "What does he mean?" said Lucy to Eliza.

Mamma repeated the question. "My beloved Robert, what concealment are you talking of?"

"I am talking of concealed property, Ma'am," says I sternly.

"And do you—what—can you—do you really suppose that I have concealed—any of that blessed sa-a-a-aint's prop-op-op-operty?" screams out mamma. "Robert," says she—"Bob, my own darling boy—my fondest, best beloved, now *he* is gone" (meaning my late governor—more tears)—"you don't, you cannot fancy that your own mother, who bore you, and nursed you, and wept for you, and would give her all to save you from a moment's harm—you don't suppose that she would che-e-e-eat you!" And here she gave a louder screech than ever, and flung back on the sofa; and one of my sisters went and tumbled into her arms, and t'other went round, and the kissing and slobbering scene went on again, only I was left out, thank goodness. I hate such sentimentality.

"*Che-e-e-eat me*," says I, mocking her. "What do you mean, then, by saying you're so rich? Say, have you got money, or have you not?" (And I rapped out a good number of oaths, too, which I don't put in here; but I was in a dreadful fury, that's the fact.)

"So help me heaven," says mamma, in answer, going down on her knees and smacking her two hands, "I have but a Queen Anne's guinea in the whole of this wicked world."

"Then what, Madam, induces you to tell these absurd stories to me, and to talk about your riches, when you know that you and your daughters are beggars, Ma'am—*beggars?*"

"My dearest boy, have we not got the house, and the furniture, and a hundred a year still; and have you not great talents, which will make all our fortunes?" says Mrs. Stubbs, getting up off her knees, and making believe to smile as she clawed hold of my hand and kissed it.

This was *too* cool. "*You* have got a hundred a year, Ma'am," says I—"*you* have got a house? Upon my soul and honour this is the first I ever heard of it; and I'll tell you what, Ma'am," says I (and it cut her *pretty sharply* too): "As you've got it, *you'd better go and live in it.* I've got quite enough to do with my own house, and every penny of my own income."

Upon this speech the old lady said nothing, but she gave a screech loud enough to be heard from here to York, and down she fell—kicking and struggling in a regular fit.

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I did not see Mrs. Stubbs for some days after this, and the girls used to come down to meals, and never speak; going up again and

stopping with their mother. At last, one day, both of them came in very solemn to my study, and Eliza, the eldest, said, "Robert, mamma has paid you our board up to Michaelmas."

"She has," says I; for I always took precious good care to have it in advance.

"She says, Robert, that on Michaelmas day—we'll—we'll go away, Robert."

"Oh, she's going to her own house, is she, Lizzy? Very good. She'll want the furniture, I suppose, and that she may have too, for I'm going to sell the place myself. And so *that* matter was settled."

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On Michaelmas day—and during these two months I hadn't, I do believe, seen my mother twice (once, about two o'clock in the morning, I woke and found her sobbing over my bed)—on Michaelmas-day morning, Eliza comes to me and says, "*Robert, they will come and fetch us at six this evening.*" Well, as this was the last day, I went and got the best goose I could find (I don't think I ever saw a primer, or ate more hearty myself), and had it roasted at three, with a good pudding afterwards; and a glorious bowl of punch. "Here's a health to you, dear girls," says I, "and you, Ma, and good luck to all three; and as you've not eaten a morsel, I hope you won't object to a glass of punch. It's the old stuff, you know, Ma'am, that that Waters sent to my father fifteen years ago."

Six o'clock came, and with it came a fine barouche. As I live, Captain Waters was on the box (it was his coach); that old thief, Bates, jumped out, entered my house, and before I could say Jack Robinson, whipped off mamma to the carriage: the girls followed, just giving me a hasty shake of the hand; and as mamma was helped in, Mary Waters, who was sitting inside, flung her arms round her, and then round the girls; and the Doctor, who acted footman, jumped on the box, and off they went; taking no more notice of *me* than if I'd been a nonentity.

Here's a picture of the whole business:—Mamma and Miss Waters are sitting kissing each other in the carriage, with the two girls in the back seat; Waters is driving (a precious bad driver he is too); and I'm standing at the garden door, and whistling. That old fool Mary Malowney is crying behind the garden gate: she went off next day along with the furniture; and I to get into that precious scrape which I shall mention next.

## SEPTEMBER.—PLUCKING A GOOSE.

AFTER my papa's death, as he left me no money, and only a little land, I put my estate into an auctioneer's hands, and determined to amuse my solitude with a trip to some of our fashionable watering-places. My house was now a desert to me. I need not say how the departure of my dear parent, and her children, left me sad and lonely.

Well, I had a little ready money, and, for the estate, expected a couple of thousand pounds. I had a good military-looking person: for though I had absolutely cut the old North Bungays (indeed, after my affair with Waters, Colonel Craw hinted to me, in the most friendly manner, that I had better resign)—though I had left the army, I still retained the rank of Captain; knowing the advantages attendant upon that title in a watering-place tour.

Captain Stubbs became a great dandy at Cheltenham, Harrogate, Bath, Leamington, and other places. I was a good whist and billiard player; so much so, that in many of these towns, the people used to refuse, at last, to play with me, knowing how far I was their superior. Fancy my surprise, about five years after the Portsmouth affair, when strolling one day up the High Street, in Leamington, my eyes lighted upon a young man, whom I remembered in a certain butcher's yard, and elsewhere—no other, in fact, than Dobble. He, too, was dressed *en militaire*, with a frogged coat and spurs; and was walking with a showy-looking, Jewish-faced, black-haired lady, glittering with chains and rings, with a green bonnet and a bird-of-Paradise—a lilac shawl, a yellow gown, pink silk stockings, and light-blue shoes. Three children, and a handsome footman, were walking behind her, and the party, not seeing me, entered the "Royal Hotel" together.

I was known myself at the "Royal," and calling one of the waiters, learned the names of the lady and gentleman. He was Captain Dobble, the son of the rich army-clothier, Dobble (Dobble, Hobble and Co. of Pall Mall);—the lady was a Mrs. Manasseh, widow of an American Jew, living quietly at Leamington with her children, but possessed of an immense property.

There's no use to give one's self out to be an absolute pauper: so the fact is, that I myself went everywhere with the character of a man of very large means. My father had died, leaving me immense sums of money, and landed estates. Ah! I was the gentleman then, the real gentleman, and everybody was too happy to have me at table.

Well, I came the next day and left a card for Dobble, with a note. He neither returned my visit, nor answered my note. The day after, however, I met him with the widow, as before; and going up to him, very kindly seized him by the hand, and swore I was—as really was the case—charmed to see him. Dobble hung back, to my surprise, and I do believe the creature would have cut me, if he dared; but I gave him a frown, and said—

"What, Dobble my boy, don't you recollect old Stubbs, and our adventure with the butcher's daughters—ha?"

Dobble gave a sickly kind of grin, and said, "Oh! ah! yes! It is—yes! it is, I believe, Captain Stubbs."

"An old comrade, Madam, of Captain Dobble's, and one who has heard so much, and seen so much of your ladyship, that he must take the liberty of begging his friend to introduce him."

Dobble was obliged to take the hint; and Captain Stubbs was duly presented to Mrs. Manasseh. The lady was as gracious as possible; and when, at the end of the walk, we parted, she said 'she hoped Captain Dobble would bring me to her apartments that evening, where she expected a few friends.' Everybody, you see, knows everybody at Leamington; and I, for my part, was well known as a retired officer of the army, who, on his father's death, had come into seven thousand a year. Dobble's arrival had been subsequent to mine; but putting up as he did at the "Royal Hotel," and dining at the ordinary there with the widow, he had made her acquaintance before I had. I saw, however, that if I allowed him to talk about me, as he could, I should be compelled to give up all my hopes and pleasures at Leamington; and so I determined to be short with him. As soon as the lady had gone into the hotel, my friend Dobble was for leaving me likewise; but I stopped him, and said, "Mr. Dobble, I saw what you meant just now: you wanted to cut me, because, forsooth, I did not choose to fight a duel at Portsmouth. Now look you, Dobble, I am no hero, but I'm not such a coward as you—and you know it. You are a very different man to deal with from Waters; and *I will fight* this time."

Not perhaps that I would: but after the business of the butcher, I knew Dobble to be as great a coward as ever lived; and there never was any harm in threatening, for you know you are not obliged to stick to it afterwards. My words had their effect upon Dobble, who stuttered and looked red, and then declared he never had the slightest intention of passing me by; so we became friends, and his mouth was stopped.

He was very thick with the widow, but that lady had a very capacious heart, and there were a number of other gentlemen who seemed equally smitten with her. "Look at that Mrs. Manasseh," said a gentleman (it was droll, *he* was a Jew, too) sitting at dinner by me. "She is old, and ugly, and yet, because she has money, all the men are flinging themselves at her."

"She has money, has she?"

"Eighty thousand pounds, and twenty thousand for each of her children. I know it *for a fact*," said the strange gentleman. "I am in the law, and we of our faith, you know, know pretty well what the great families amongst us are worth."

"Who was Mr. Manasseh?" said I.

"A man of enormous wealth—a tobacco-merchant—West Indies; a fellow of no birth, however; and who, between ourselves, married a woman that is not much better than she should be. My dear sir," whispered he, "she is always in love. Now it is with that Captain Dobble; last week it was somebody else—and it may be you next week, if—ha! ha! ha!—you are disposed to enter the lists. I wouldn't, for *my* part, have the woman with twice her money."

What did it matter to me whether the woman was good or not, provided she was rich? My course was quite clear. I told Dobble all that this gentleman had informed me, and being a pretty good hand at making a story, I made the widow appear *so* bad, that the poor fellow was quite frightened, and fairly quitted the field. Ha! ha! I'm dashed if I did not make him believe that Mrs. Manasseh had *murdered* her last husband.

I played my game so well, thanks to the information that my friend the lawyer had given me, that in a month I had got the widow to show a most decided partiality for me. I sat by her at dinner, I drank with her at the "Wells"—I rode with her, I danced with her, and at a picnic to Kenilworth, where we drank a good deal of champagne, I actually popped the question, and was accepted. In another month,

Robert Stubbs, Esq., led to the altar, Leah, widow of the late Z. Manasseh, Esq., of St. Kitt's!

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We drove up to London in her comfortable chariot: the children and servants following in a postchaise. I paid, of course, for everything; and until our house in Berkeley Square was painted, we stopped at "Stevens's Hotel."

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My own estate had been sold, and the money was lying at a bank in the City. About three days after our arrival, as we took our breakfast in the hotel, previous to a visit to Mrs. Stubbs's banker, where certain little transfers were to be made, a gentleman was introduced, who, I saw at a glance, was of my wife's persuasion.

He looked at Mrs. Stubbs, and made a bow. "Perhaps it will be convenient to you to pay this little bill, one hundred and fifty-two pounds?"

"My love," says she, "will you pay this—it is a trifle which I had really forgotten?"

"My soul!" said I, "I have really not the money in the house."

"Vel, denn, Captain Shtubbsh," says he, "I must do my duty—and arrest you—here is the writ! Tom, keep the door!"—My wife fainted—the children screamed, and I fancy my condition as I was obliged to march off to a spunging-house along with a horrid sheriff's officer!

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## OCTOBER.—MARS AND VENUS IN OPPOSITION.

I SHALL not describe my feelings when I found myself in a cage in Cursitor Street, instead of that fine house in Berkeley Square, which was to have been mine as the husband of Mrs. Manasseh. What a place!—in an odious, dismal street leading from Chancery Lane. A hideous Jew boy opened the second of three doors and shut it when Mr. Nabb and I (almost fainting) had entered; then he opened the third door, and then I was introduced to a filthy place called a coffee-room, which I exchanged for the solitary comfort of a little dingy back-parlour, where I was left for a while to brood over my miserable fate. Fancy the change between this and Berkeley

Square! Was I, after all my pains, and cleverness, and perseverance, cheated at last? Had this Mrs. Manasseh been imposing upon me, and were the words of the wretch I met at the table-d'hôte at Leamington only meant to mislead me and take me in? I determined to send for my wife, and know the whole truth. I saw at once that I had been the victim of an infernal plot, and that the carriage, the house in town, the West India fortune, were only so many lies which I had blindly believed. It was true the debt was but a hundred and fifty pounds; and I had two thousand at my bankers'. But was the loss of *her* 80,000*l.* nothing? Was the destruction of my hopes nothing? The accursed addition to my family of a Jewish wife and three Jewish children, nothing? And all these I was to support out of my two thousand pounds. I had better have stopped at home with my mamma and sisters, whom I really did love, and who produced me eighty pounds a year.

I had a furious interview with Mrs. Stubbs; and when I charged her, the base wretch! with cheating me, like a brazen serpent as she was, she flung back the cheat in my teeth, and swore I had swindled her. Why did I marry her, when she might have had twenty others? She only took me, she said, because I had twenty thousand pounds. I *had* said I possessed that sum; but in love, you know, and war all's fair.

We parted quite as angrily as we met; and I cordially vowed that when I had paid the debt into which I had been swindled by her, I would take my 2,000*l.* and depart to some desert island; or, at the very least, to America, and never see her more, or any of her Israelitish brood. There was no use in remaining in the spunging-house (for I knew that there were such things as detainers, and that where Mrs. Stubbs owed a hundred pounds, she might owe a thousand): so I sent for Mr. Nabb, and tendering him a cheque for 150*l.* and his costs, requested to be let out forthwith. "Here, fellow," said I, "is a cheque on Child's for your paltry sum."

"It may be a sheck on Shild's," says Mr. Nabb; "but I should be a baby to let you out on such a paper as dat."

"Well," said I, "Child's is but a step from this: you may go and get the cash,—just give me an acknowledgment."

Nabb drew out the acknowledgment with great punctuality, and set off for the bankers', whilst I prepared myself for departure from this abominable prison.

He smiled as he came in. "Well," said I, "you have touched your money; and now, I must tell you, that you are the most infernal rogue and extortioner I ever met with."

"Oh, no, Mishter Shtubbsh," says he, grinning still. "Dere is som greater roag dan me,—mosh greater."

"Fellow," said I, "don't stand grinning before a gentleman; but give me my hat and cloak, and let me leave your filthy den."

"Shtop, Shtubbsh," says he, not even Mistering me this time. "Here ish a letter, vich you had better read."

I opened the letter; something fell to the ground:—it was my cheque.

The letter ran thus: "Messrs. Child and Co. present their compliments to Captain Stubbs, and regret that they have been obliged to refuse payment of the enclosed, having been served this day with an attachment by Messrs. Solomonson and Co., which compels them to retain Captain Stubbs' balance of 2,010*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.* until the decision of the suit of Solomonson *v.* Stubbs. *Fleet Street.*"

"You see," says Mr. Nabb, as I read this dreadful letter—"you see, Shtubbsh, dere vas two debts,—a little von and a big von. So dey arrested you for de little von, and attashed your money for de big von."

Don't laugh at me for telling this story. If you knew what tears are blotting over the paper as I write it—if you knew that for weeks after I was more like a madman than a sane man,—a madman in the Fleet Prison, where I went instead of to the desert island! What had I done to deserve it? Hadn't I always kept an eye to the main chance? Hadn't I lived economically, and not like other young men? Had I ever been known to squander or give away a single penny? No! I can lay my hand on my heart, and, thank heaven, say, No! Why, why was I punished so?

Let me conclude this miserable history. Seven months—my wife saw me once or twice, and then dropped me altogether—I remained in that fatal place. I wrote to my dear mamma, begging her to sell her furniture, but got no answer. All my old friends turned their backs upon me. My action went against me—I had not a penny to defend it. Solomonson proved my wife's debt, and seized my two thousand pounds. As for the detainer against me, I was obliged to go through the court for the relief of insolvent debtors. I passed through it, and came out a beggar. But fancy the malice of that

wicked Stiffelkind: he appeared in court as my creditor for 3*l.*, with sixteen years' interest at five per cent., for a PAIR OF TOP-BOOTS. The old thief produced them in court, and told the whole story—Lord Cornwallis, the detection, the pumping and all.

Commissioner Dubobwig was very funny about it. "So Doctor Swishtail would not pay you for the boots, eh, Mr. Stiffelkind?"

"No: he said, ven I asked him for payment, dey was ordered by a yong boy, and I ought to have gone to his schoolmaster."

"What! then you came on a *bootless* errand, ay, sir?" (A laugh.)

"Bootless! no sare, I brought de boots back vid me. How de devil else could I show dem to you?" (Another laugh.)

"You've never *soled* 'em since, Mr. Tickleshins?"

"I never would sell dem; I svore I never vood, on porpus to be revenged on dat Stobbs."

"What! your wound has never been *healed*, eh?"

"Vat de you mean vid your bootless errands, and your soling and healing? I tell you I have done vat I svore to do: I have exposed him at school; I have broak off a marriage for him, ven he vould have had tventy tousand pound; and now I have showed him up in a court of justice. Dat is vat I 'ave done, and dat's enough." And then the old wretch went down, whilst everybody was giggling and staring at poor me—as if I was not miserable enough already.

"This seems the dearest pair of boots you ever had in your life, Mr. Stubbs," said Commissioner Dubobwig very archly, and then he began to inquire about the rest of my misfortunes.

In the fulness of my heart I told him the whole of them: how Mr. Solomonson the attorney had introduced me to the rich widow, Mrs. Manasseh, who had fifty thousand pounds, and an estate in the West Indies. How I was married, and arrested on coming to town, and cast in an action for two thousand pounds brought against me by this very Solomonson for my wife's debts.

"Stop!" says a lawyer in the court. "Is this woman a showy black-haired woman with one eye? very often drunk, with three children?—Solomonson, short, with red hair?"

"Exactly so," said I, with tears in my eyes.

"That woman has married *three men* within the last two years. One in Ireland, and one at Bath. A Solomonson is, I believe, her husband, and they both are off for America ten days ago."

"But why did you not keep your 2,000*l.*?" said the lawyer.

"Sir, they attached it."

"Oh, well, we may pass you. You have been unlucky, Mr. Stubbs, but it seems as if the biter had been bit in this affair."

"No," said Mr. Dubobwig. "Mr. Stubbs is the victim of a FATAL ATTACHMENT."

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NOVEMBER.—A GENERAL POST DELIVERY.

I WAS a free man when I went out of the Court; but I was a beggar—I, Captain Stubbs, of the bold North Bungays, did not know where I could get a bed, or a dinner.

As I was marching sadly down Portugal Street, I felt a hand on my shoulder and a rough voice which I knew well.

"Vell, Mr. Stobbs, have I not kept my promise? I told you dem boots would be your ruin."

I was much too miserable to reply; and only cast my eyes towards the roofs of the houses, which I could not see for the tears.

"Vat! you begin to gry and blobber like a shild? you vood marry, vood you? and noting vood do for you but a vife vid monny —ha, ha—but you vere de pigeon, and she was de grow. She has plocked you, too, pretty vell—eh? ha! ha!"

"Oh, Mr. Stiffelkind," said I, "don't laugh at my misery: she has not left me a single shilling under heaven. And I shall starve: I do believe I shall starve." And I began to cry fit to break my heart.

"Starf! stoff and nonsense! You vill never die of starfing—you vill die of *hanging*, I tink—ho! ho!—and it is moch easier vay too." I didn't say a word, but cried on; till everybody in the street turned round and stared.

"Come, come," said Stiffelkind, "do not gry, Gaptain Stobbs —it is not goot for a Gaptain to gry—ha! ha! Dere—come vid me, and you shall have a dinner, and a bregfast too,—vich shall gost you nothing, until you can bay vid your earnings."

And so this curious old man, who had persecuted me all through my prosperity, grew compassionate towards me in my ill-luck; and

took me home with him as he promised. "I saw your name among de Insolvents, and I vowed, you know, to make you repent dem boots. Dere, now, it is done and forgotten, look you. Here, Betty, Bettchen, make de spare bed, and put a clean knife and fork; Lort Cornvallis is come to dine vid me."

I lived with this strange old man for six weeks. I kept his books, and did what little I could to make myself useful: carrying about boots and shoes, as if I had never borne his Majesty's commission. He gave me no money, but he fed and lodged me comfortably. The men and boys used to laugh, and call me General, and Lord Cornwallis, and all sorts of nicknames; and old Stiffelkind made a thousand new ones for me.

One day I can recollect—one miserable day, as I was polishing on the trees a pair of boots of Mr. Stiffelkind's manufacture—the old gentleman came into the shop, with a lady on his arm.

"Vere is Gaptain Stobbs?" said he. "Vere is dat ornament to his Majesty's service?"

I came in from the back shop, where I was polishing the boots, with one of them in my hand.

"Look, my dear," says he, "here is an old friend of yours, his Excellency Lort Cornvallis!—Who would have thought such a nobleman vood turn shoeblack? Captain Stobbs, here is your former flame, my dear niece, Miss Grotty. How could you, Magdalen, ever leaf such a lof of a man? Shake hands vid her, Gaptain;—dere, never mind de blacking!" But Miss drew back.

"I never shake hands with a *shoeblack*," said she, mighty contemptuous.

"Bah! my lof, his fingers von't soil you. Don't you know he has just been *vitevashed*?"

"I wish, uncle," says she, "you would not leave me with such low people."

"Low, because he cleans boots? De Gaptain prefers *pumps* to boots I tink—ha! ha!"

"Captain indeed! a nice Captain," says Miss Crutty, snapping ner fingers in my face, and walking away: "a Captain who has had his nose pulled! ha! ha!"—And how could I help it? it wasn't by my own *choice* that that ruffian Waters took such liberties with me. Didn't I show how averse I was to all quarrels by refusing altogether his challenge?—But such is the world. And thus the

people at Stiffelkind's used to tease me, until they drove me almost mad.

At last he came home one day more merry and abusive than ever. "Gaptain," says he, "I have goot news for you—a goot place. Your lordship vill not be able to geep your garridge, but you vill be gomfortable, and serve his Majesty."

"Serve his Majesty?" says I, "Dearest Mr. Stiffelkind, have you got me a place under Government?"

"Yes, and somting better still—not only a place, but a uniform: yes, Gaptain Stobbs, a *red goat*."

"A red coat! I hope you don't think I would demean myself by entering the ranks of the army? I am a gentleman, Mr. Stiffelkind—I can never—no, I never——"

"No, I know you will never—you are too great a goward—ha! ha!—though dis is a red goat, and a place where you must give some *hard knocks* too—ha! ha!—do you gomprehend?—and you shall be a general instead of a gaptain—ha! ha!"

"A general in a red coat, Mr. Stiffelkind?"

"Yes, a GENERAL BOSTMAN!—ha! ha! I have been vid your old friend, Bunting, and he has an uncle in the Post Office, and he has got you de place—eighteen shillings a veek, you rogue, and your goat. You must not oben any of de letters you know."

And so it was—I, Robert Stubbs, Esquire, became the vile thing he named—a general postman!

* * * * *

I was so disgusted with Stiffelkind's brutal jokes, which were now more brutal than ever, that when I got my place in the Post Office, I never went near the fellow again: for though he had done me a favour in keeping me from starvation, he certainly had done it in a very rude, disagreeable manner, and showed a low and mean spirit in *shoving* me into such a degraded place as that of postman. But what had I to do? I submitted to fate, and for three years or more, Robert Stubbs, of the North Bungay Fencibles, was ——

I wonder nobody recognized me. I lived in daily fear the first year: but afterwards grew accustomed to my situation, as all great men will do, and wore my red coat as naturally as if I had been sent into the world only for the purpose of being a letter-carrier.

I was first in the Whitechapel district, where I stayed for nearly three years, when I was transferred to Jermyn Street and Duke

Street—famous places for lodgings. I suppose I left a hundred letters at a house in the latter street, where lived some people who must have recognized me had they but once chanced to look at me.

You see that, when I left Sloffemsquiggle, and set out in the gay world, my mamma had written to me a dozen times at least; but I never answered her, for I knew she wanted money, and I detest writing. Well, she stopped her letters, finding she could get none from me: —but when I was in the Fleet, as I told you, I wrote repeatedly to my dear mamma, and was not a little nettled at her refusing to notice me in my distress, which is the very time one most wants notice.

Stubbs is not an uncommon name; and though I saw MRS. STUBBS on a little bright brass plate, in Duke Street, and delivered so many letters to the lodgers in her house, I never thought of asking who she was, or whether she was my relation, or not.

One day the young woman who took in the letters had not got change, and she called her mistress. An old lady in a poke-bonnet came out of the parlour, and put on her spectacles, and looked at the letter, and fumbled in her pocket for eightpence, and apologized to the postman for keeping him waiting. And when I said, "Never mind, Ma'am, it's no trouble," the old lady gave a start, and then she pulled off her spectacles, and staggered back; and then she began muttering, as if about to choke; and then she gave a great screech, and flung herself into my arms, and roared out, "MY SON, MY SON!"

"Law, mamma," said I, "is that you?" and I sat down on the hall bench with her, and let her kiss me as much as ever she liked. Hearing the whining and crying, down comes another lady from up-stairs,—it was my sister Eliza; and down come the lodgers. And the maid gets water and what not, and I was the regular hero of the group. I could not stay long then, having my letters to deliver. But, in the evening, after mail-time, I went back to my mamma and sister; and, over a bottle of prime old port, and a precious good leg of boiled mutton and turnips, made myself pretty comfortable, I can tell you.

DECEMBER.—"THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT."

MAMMA had kept the house in Duke Street for more than two years. I recollected some of the chairs and tables from dear old Sloffemsquiggle, and the bowl in which I had made that famous rum-punch, the evening she went away, which she and my sisters left untouched, and I was obliged to drink after they were gone; but that's not to the purpose.

Think of my sister Lucy's luck! that chap, Waters, fell in love with her, and married her; and she now keeps her carriage, and lives in state near Sloffemsquiggle. I offered to make it up with Waters; but he bears malice, and never will see or speak to me.—He had the impudence, too, to say, that he took in all letters for mamma at Sloffemsquiggle; and that as mine were all begging-letters, he burned them, and never said a word to her concerning them. He allowed mamma fifty pounds a year, and, if she were not such a fool, she might have had three times as much; but the old lady was high and mighty forsooth, and would not be beholden, even to her own daughter, for more than she actually wanted. Even this fifty pound she was going to refuse; but when I came to live with her, of course I wanted pocket-money as well as board and lodging, and so I had the fifty pounds for *my* share, and eked out with it as well as I could.

Old Bates and the Captain, between them, gave mamma a hundred pounds when she left me (she had the deuce's own luck, to be sure—much more than ever fell to *me*, I know); and as she said she *would* try and work for her living, it was thought best to take a house and let lodgings, which she did. Our first and second floor paid us four guineas a week, on an average; and the front parlour and attic made forty pounds more. Mamma and Eliza used to have the front attic: but *I* took that, and they slept in the servants' bedroom. Lizzy had a pretty genius for work, and earned a guinea a week that way; so that we had got nearly two hundred a year over the rent to keep house with,—and we got on pretty well. Besides, women eat nothing: my women didn't care for meat for days together sometimes,—so that it was only necessary to dress a good steak or so for me.

Mamma would not think of my continuing in the Post Office. She said her dear Robert, her husband's son, her gallant soldier, and all that,

should remain at home and be a gentleman—which I was, certainly, though I didn't find fifty pounds a year very much to buy clothes and be a gentleman upon. To be sure, mother found me shirts and linen, so that *that* wasn't in the fifty pounds. She kicked a little at paying the washing too; but she gave in at last, for I was her dear Bob, you know; and I'm blest if I could not make her give me the gown off her back. Fancy! once she cut up a very nice rich black silk scarf, which my sister Waters sent her, and made me a waistcoat and two stocks of it. She was so *very* soft, the old lady!

* * * * *

I'd lived in this way for five years or more, making myself content with my fifty pounds a year (*perhaps* I'd saved a little out of it; but that's neither here nor there). From year's end to year's end I remained faithful to my dear mamma, never leaving her except for a month or so in the summer—when a bachelor may take a trip to Gravesend or Margate, which would be too expensive for a family. I say a bachelor, for the fact is, I don't know whether I am married or not—never having heard a word since of the scoundrelly Mrs. Stubbs.

I never went to the public-house before meals: for, with my beggarly fifty pounds, I could not afford to dine away from home: but there I had my regular seat, and used to come home *pretty glorious*, I can tell you. Then bed till eleven; then breakfast and the newspaper; then a stroll in Hyde Park or St. James's; then home at half-past three to dinner—when I jollied, as I call it, for the rest of the day. I was my mother's delight; and thus, with a clear conscience, I managed to live on.

* * * * *

How fond she was of me, to be sure! Being sociable myself, and loving to have my friends about me, we often used to assemble a company of as hearty fellows as you would wish to sit down with, and keep the nights up royally. "Never mind, my boys," I used to say. "Send the bottle round: mammy pays for all." As she did, sure enough: and sure enough we punished her cellar too. The good old lady used to wait upon us, as if for all the world she had been my servant, instead of a lady and my mamma. Never used she to repine, though I often, as I must confess, gave her occasion (keeping her up till four o'clock in the morning, because she never could sleep until she saw her "dear Bob" in bed, and leading her a sad anxious life). She was of such a sweet temper, the old lady, that I think in the

course of five years I never knew her in a passion, except twice: and then with sister Lizzy, who declared I was ruining the house, and driving the lodgers away, one by one. But mamma would not hear of such envious spite on my sister's part. "Her Bob" was always right, she said. At last Lizzy fairly retreated, and went to the Waters's.—I was glad of it, for her temper was dreadful, and we used to be squabbling from morning till night!

Ah, those *were* jolly times! but Ma was obliged to give up the lodging-house at last—for, somehow, things went wrong after my sister's departure—the nasty uncharitable people said, on account of *me;* because I drove away the lodgers by smoking and drinking, and kicking up noises in the house; and because Ma gave me so much of her money:—so she did, but if she *would* give it, you know, how could I help it? Heigho! I wish I'd *kept* it.

No such luck. The business I thought was to last for ever; but at the end of two years came a smash—shut up shop—sell off everything. Mamma went to the Waters's: and, will you believe it? the ungrateful wretches would not receive me! that Mary, you see, was *so* disappointed at not marrying me. Twenty pounds a year they allow, it is true; but what's that for a gentleman? For twenty years I have been struggling manfully to gain an honest livelihood, and, in the course of them, have seen a deal of life, to be sure. I've sold cigars and pocket-handkerchiefs at the corners of streets; I've been a billiard-marker; I've been a director (in the panic year) of the Imperial British Consolidated Mangle and Drying Ground Company. I've been on the stage (for two years as an actor, and about a month as a cad, when I was very low); I've been the means of giving to the police of this empire some very valuable information (about licensed victuallers, gentlemen's carts, and pawnbrokers' names); I've been very nearly an officer again—that is, an assistant to an officer of the Sheriff of Middlesex: it was my last place.

On the last day of the year 1837, even *that* game was up. It's a thing that very seldom happened to a gentleman, to be kicked out of a spunging-house; but such was my case. Young Nabb (who succeeded his father) drove me ignominiously from his door, because I had charged a gentleman in the coffee-rooms seven-and-sixpence for a glass of ale and bread and cheese, the charge of the house being only six shillings. He had the meanness to deduct the eighteenpence from my wages, and because I blustered a bit, he took

me by the shoulders and turned me out—me, a gentleman, and, what is more, a poor orphan !

How I did rage and swear at him when I got out into the street ! There stood he, the hideous Jew monster, at the double door, writhing under the effect of my language. I had my revenge ! Heads were thrust out of every bar of his windows, laughing at him. A crowd gathered round me, as I stood pounding him with my satire, and they evidently enjoyed his discomfiture. I think the mob would have pelted the ruffian to death (one or two of their missiles hit *me*, I can tell you), when a policeman came up, and in reply to a gentleman, who was asking what was the disturbance, said, " Bless you, sir, it's Lord Cornwallis." " Move on, *Boots*," said the fellow to me ; for the fact is, my misfortunes and early life are pretty well known—and so the crowd dispersed.

" What could have made that policeman call you Lord Cornwallis and Boots ? " said the gentleman, who seemed mightily amused, and had followed me. " Sir," says I, " I am an unfortunate officer of the North Bungay Fencibles, and I'll tell you willingly for a pint of beer." He told me to follow him to his chambers in the Temple, which I did (a five pair back), and there, sure enough, I had the beer ; and told him this very story you've been reading. You see he is what is called a literary man—and sold my adventures for me to the booksellers : he's a strange chap ; and says they're *moral.*

* * * * * *

I'm blest if *I* can see anything moral in them. I'm sure I ought to have been more lucky through life, being so very wide awake. And yet here I am, without a place, or even a friend, starving upon a beggarly twenty pounds a year—not a single sixpence more, upon *my honour.*

THE END.

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